

050

The

BURLINGTON

PERIODICAL

North American

Review

Summer Fiction Issue

The Mistake

Inviolate on Shawnee St.

A Countryman's Hand

The Frost Giant

Who Will Save the Evergreens?

The Pocahontas Part

Fiction, Poetry, Departments, and Reviews

Volume 251/4

July, 1966

\$1.00

The Fabulist



THE TWO LEARNED BROTHERS

Once there were two brothers. They were students, and they studied all things that could be known by man. Night after night they read by themselves while the candle burned low between them. They learned the secrets of the stars and those of the precious metals in the earth.

One day the older brother said, "I see that a plague will shortly visit our village. I will go and warn the people."

However, when he made known his discovery, he was laughed at. The people said they had not had a plague in years and their sanitation system was the best in the country. When the older brother persisted in his predictions, the townsmen threw stones and mocked him. He returned home sad.

When the plague did come, the townspeople said it was the work of black magic. They gathered in little bands and talked of evil workings. Finally they came to the home of the brothers, dragged the older out, and hung him from a tree.

The younger brother said to himself, "There is no good end will come of me. I will burn my books. Ignorance is safer than knowledge."

THE SINGING FROG

Once upon a time there was a frog who lived in a swamp. This frog had a very deep bass voice and was continually croaking. Day after day he would sit in the sun and croak.

At first people ignored him. Then they became angry because his croaking disturbed them. But finally they recognized him as a great singer. Folks would come from far countries to hear him, and the young singers listened to his advice with open ears.

One day a little bird came to the frog and said, "How is it that you, who have done nothing but sit on a lily pad and croak in the sun, are hailed as a great singer, while I, who have gotten my song from the little flowers in the mountains and the hidden streams in the forests, am ignored?"

"Ah," said the frog. "It is plain you know nothing. The secret of success is not what you sing, but how loud."

Victor Contoski

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW is revived with the cooperation of
The Honorable Claiborne Pell, Senator from Rhode Island.

The North American Review

New Series: Volume III No. Four

Old Series: Volume 251

July, 1966

CONTENTS

	The Fabulist	<i>Inside Front Cover</i>
<i>Staff</i>	Unloading Zone	2
<i>Editor:</i> Robert P. Dana	Two Poems <i>James Tate</i>	3
	Pot On The Fire	4
	Letters To Messrs. Ford, etc.	
	Dear Mr. . . .	
<i>Managing Editor:</i> Bernard E. Richardson	On Meeting-With . . .	
	On War	
	Vive Egalite!	
	Cherub Psychology	
<i>Poetry:</i> Marvin Bell	Internal Revenue a poem <i>Judith Eisenstein</i>	8
	The Mistake <i>Curtis Harnack</i>	9
	Who Will Save The Evergreens? <i>B. Canary Van Lare</i>	14
<i>Copy:</i> Geneva Meers	What Does The Critic Write About? <i>Leo J. Hertz</i>	16
	The Dust a poem <i>Milton Gilman</i>	17
	The Frost Giant <i>James Sunwall</i>	19
<i>Staff Artist:</i> Hugh Lifson	Two Poems <i>Al Lee</i>	20
	The Pocahontas Part <i>Alyce Ingram</i>	24
	Instant Poetry <i>Tony Swain</i>	26
<i>Staff:</i> Dorothy Ellison David Messman Jerome Mazzaro Audrey Borenstein	A Countryman's Hand <i>William Sayres</i>	28
	A Question a poem <i>Philip Hammial</i>	29
	Inviolat On Shawnee St. <i>Jack Matthews</i>	32
	Two Poems <i>Harold Tinkle</i>	34
	Books	37
	Two Poems <i>Peter Clothier</i>	38
	Contributors	<i>Inside Back Cover</i>

The North American Review, July, 1966. Old Series Volume 251, New Series Volume III Number Four Published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September, November. Publication, Editorial, and General Offices at Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa. \$1.00 a copy, \$6.00 a year in the U. S.; Canada and Latin America, \$6.15; all other countries, \$7.00. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelope with return postage. Printed in the U.S.A. by Economy Advertising Company, Iowa City, Iowa. Copyright 1966 by Cornell College. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Entered as second class matter at Mount Vernon, Iowa.

Back file volumes available from University Microfilm, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan.
Subscribers must notify publisher of failure to receive within six weeks of date of issue.



PEPSI PURITANISM

Sex is dead.

Well, nearly. It's in some deep ditch beside U. S. #1. Its legs broken, suffering from concussion and exposure, losing consciousness. Its Eveready-powered flashlight is flickering dimly. It will probably be dead by morning.

What caused the wreck? If the patient doesn't survive, we may never find out.

One thing is certain. There is a new old trend in the American attitude toward sex. More accurately, one may say that we have found a way to mediate between our traditional Puritanism and our drive toward sexual revolution. In short, there is a *New Puritanism* in America. Its credo was pronounced nonchalantly by a topless go-go girl in that most wicked of our capitals of acne, San Francisco. As she served up her breasts with a round of drinks, Miss Go Go told her customers, "Look, but don't touch."

The appearance of sex is everywhere. In ads for men's shoes ("Natural skin cannot be duplicated." — see nude;) in recipes ("Six Immoral Chocolate Desserts" . . . go "gloriously, orgiastically, all the way chocolate.") in movies, comic strips, novels, poetry, neon signs, dance styles, women's and men's fashions. (See the plastic see-through dress featured by, Holy Smokes, Batman!, Puritan Fashions.) Its *appearance* is everywhere. So much so that Henry Miller, whose name in some quarters is synonymous with sex, was asked recently, "Are you bored with sex?" Miller replied, "One can't get bored with sex. But one is bored with making such a tremendous issue of it. This constant harping on sex all the time is so immature, . . . It's as though we were a race of adolescents."

What most of the old Puritans and the forces against sexual candor fail to recognize about young Americans between the ages of 16 and 36 is that the *appearance* of sex or *sexiness* is actually a substitute for sexual commitment itself.

It's true, for instance, that most college boys plaster the walls of their rooms with *Playboy* nudes (as most of their fathers probably plastered their barracks-lockers with Petty Girls.) But few of today's wall-hangers, probably less than 1%, are involved in pre-marital pregnancies. As to the reading of *Playboy* itself, which has become a kind of international pastime, Marion Magid sums it up in a recent article:

Nothing about Playboy . . . is quite so startling . . . as the discrepancy between its tone and its content. Urging upon its readers a standard of performance that would do credit to an erotomaniac Romanian at the court of Catherine the Great, it nevertheless manages to call up images out of Horatio Alger.

Dances and popular music are always a fairly reliable index of the general state of American emotion. Consider the Twist, the Frug, the Monkey, the Watusi. Many of the captains of decency disparage these dances as "orgiastic." It's true some of the gyrations in these dances are suggestive of the sexual act or an evening at Minsky's. But it is all *appearance, suggestion*, little more. In reality these dances are as orgiastic as vanilla pudding. No one touches anyone else. For real body contact, they are not in the same league with the fox trot, or even grandmother's favorite, the waltz. They are really a form of calisthenics.

And the combos which provide the music for these contests of endurance: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Animals: their feminine hair-styles and high-pitched voices seem a masculine counter-attempt to wipe out sexual differences in appearance. Their 'sex-appeal' is hardly a Sixties version of the virile gravel of Louis Armstrong or the seductive satin of Frank Sinatra. Their song titles, too, are sexless: "Hang on Sloopy," "Get Off My Cloud," "Nineteenth Nervous Breakdown."

Marya Mannes nailed down a lot of things in an interview quoted recently in *Esquire*:

Some of the guys teen-age girls squeal about most these days do not suggest the masculine great male. Could be that the popularity of the long-haired reedy types is a reaction against the real tough guys — real sex. In their dances they do the bumps and grinds in a daze. They never touch; they might as well be alone in a vacuum. And the songs they like . . . I Want to Hold Your Hand, there's nothing very torrid about that. Their fashions, too, show a striking lack of sex. The granny gown — that shapeless thing — indicates a return to innocence. The Courreges stuff, the eternal little girl . . .

One finds it hard to disagree. But the "granny" is probably not indicative of the desire of the teen-ager or young adult to "return to innocence." That would be, to a certain extent, natural and understandable. The striking thing about the "granny" fashions is the suggestion that those who wear them may wish themselves on the *far* side of sexuality: with grandma, beyond the necessity of sexual commitment.

What then are we to say of the statistical studies which show that pre-marital sex is on the rise and that teen-age VD is widespread. The possible answers are many. Statistics-compilers employ much more sophisticated and effective techniques than they did 50 years ago. The actual numbers involved, therefore, may be no greater than they were. On the other hand, it may be that the numbers really *are* up. In which case, the rise may indicate an attempt on the part of a desperate few to escape the sexlessness our business-machine culture forces upon them. Finally, increased pre-marital sexual activity may simply be an extension of the picture we have just examined. It may be that those involved in such relationships see each other not as persons at all, but simply "as another aspect of the hot-rod car," as Miss Mannes points out, "something to get a charge or kick out of."

In any case, real danger lies in the fact that we may now be witnessing, in those born during WW II and after, the death of sex. The reduction of it to nothing but appearances. The sexual revolution computed, transistorized, pre-packaged, and marketed, without commitment and without pleasure. A Pepsi Puritanism.

RPD

CLOSING THE CHAMBER DOORS

His eyes are the artifacts
of a private glacial age.
The doctors have given him

forty years to live, have
given him fifty, but this
morning there were lagoons

of sawfish coiled in
the clock's alarm. Today he
cannot hoist the dishrags

above the secret orifices
of Chicago, for the Dalai Lama
of Menninger's has come

to lead him to his chamber.
As he reports the caterwaul
of bees he has recently

swallowed, the expert, like
an old Navaho squaw, weaves
his sutures, stopping

the lip's incessant flutter.

SAINT VITUS'S DANCE

He puts the pieces
of a thin shell that
he broke in a ditch

and walks on picking
himself a bouquet
that soon explodes in

his hand. Heat moves
beneath him. Above,
ducks convulse and their

blood dries as they fall
on him like a dose
of acid. Eyelashes

of white whales sprinkle
from an abandoned
well that he stares down;

Confederate suits
shift in the cave where,
again, he tries to

stand still; but the ends
of his fingers keep
glowing and burning.

James Tate



LETTER TO MESSRS FORD, ROCKFELLER, GUGGENHEIM, ETC.

Dear Sirs:

I am thirty years old. Ever since I can remember I have been a lover of truth. I trust you are familiar with my poems, which have appeared in various magazines whose editors were recipients of your generous awards.

I am very sensitive, as you may know, and my present financial condition is the cause of much grief to my art-loving friends.

I am sending you under separate cover a box of my tears. They are hard now and might easily pass for stone, but your lips will discover they are salt.

Please send me my money.

Sincerely yours,

Victor Contoski

DEAR MR. . . .

Dear Mr. Homer:

(I hope this salutation is not incorrect. We were somewhat confused by your signing your letter as if you had only one name, like Colette, or Fabian.)

We have now had the opportunity to read your exciting manuscript, the *Iliad*, and I regret to say that we shall be unable to offer to publish it (we were not certain as to how you wanted to submit it, as fiction, poetry, or for our Boys' Adventure Series, so we *all* had to read it — a not unpleasant task, I might add).

We feel that your whole approach to the fine story you have to tell has been misconceived. To begin the account of a ten-year war (a duration that in itself taxes one's credulity) smack in the middle of the tenth year struck us as arbitrary, especially since you insist, so near the beginning, on naming all the different tribes and chiefs (couldn't you just call them "Greeks" and let it go at that?). We were hoping that you would be able to tie up the loose ends when you got to the denouement, but, on the contrary, you break off after Hector's funeral as if you were sitting on some stoop and had to call a halt because it was getting dark. We feel you should wind up with the sort of community-wide catastrophe that has become traditional in this sort of story — not, for heaven's sake, another battle, of which there are far too many already, though your obviously firsthand knowledge and sharp eye are everywhere in effective evidence. Try something different for the ending, something gimmicky, even.

If you insist on the present downbeat close, there is still a lot of rewriting I would urge you to do before you seek another publisher. That a man like Achilles should come out on top in a fair fight with a man like

Hector will simply not go down with most readers (more women read this sort of thing than you would imagine) and will almost certainly nix any media sales you might be hoping for. As for Hector's taking fright and running away from Achilles — well, when I read that, I felt sure that our author was on his first book. Am I right?

Your lack of consideration for your audience (which will be corrected as soon as you enjoy more exposure) also shows itself in your Helen-Paris treatment. She should never sleep with him after she finds out he's a coward. A little ring-a-ding between her and Hector might not be a bad idea. True, it would take away from the emotion of the latter's farewell to his wife and son. May I say that everyone in the office agreed that *that* was well done? I myself shed a tear over it, and, after the junk I have to wade through every day, it's not easy to reach me. Now if you could only bring the rest of the book up to that level, and perhaps tone down the Achilles-Patroclus business, I think you might really have something, though perhaps not for our house.

Good luck to you in your civilian career. If the rejection letters keep coming in, why not try something completely different — a peacetime story, say, revolving around somebody who's more of an average joe?

Yours sincerely,
The Editors



Dear Mr. Alighieri:

Thank you for allowing us to read your poem, *Comedy*. We have now received reports from our three readers (we sent each of them a different section so as to obtain as wide a range of opinion as possible), and we regret to say that we shall be unable to make an offer of publication.

The first objection is to the title itself. One of the readers found it vague, and the other two (the ones who read the first two parts, I think) found it downright misleading. They made the point that your poem, while not depressing, exactly, is hardly a laugh a minute. Why not qualify the title with some adjective that does justice to its very important theme?

Then there's your habit of pulling the hair, and kicking the faces, of those among the damned whom you dislike and whose bodies are defenselessly stuck in ice or what-have-you. I am not sure whether you act in this manner in obedience to the dictates of your moral code (you're a Catholic, you say), and I would not want to offend you in that connection, but I think I should tell you that such behavior strikes the Anglo-

Saxon mind as excessive (I hasten to add that our readers are representative of the three major Western religions, as these are defined in most survey histories. Two of our free-lancers, Mr. Boatwright and Mr. Arnolfini, read *Hell* and *Purgatory* respectively, and our own Mr. Gershman did the *Paradise*). I would think it advisable, before you seek another publisher, to rewrite these passages in the interests of a stronger sense of fair play, and also to temper the dogmatic tone that unfortunately pervades the work. Love, death and salvation are of the greatest moment, no doubt, and in our current literary climate it does a publisher's heart good to come across a manuscript with such strong commitments in these matters, but I wonder whether a preoccupation as exclusive as yours doesn't result in a certain forbiddingness of manner that cannot help but alienate potential readers? (I urge you to get a new photo taken. The profile shot you enclosed has none of the welcoming warmth we like to see on the back of a jacket.)

There's another — perhaps more delicate — problem with which I think you should deal. I understand, via the literary grapevine, that Miss Portinari, who figures so prominently in the concluding section of your triptych, is a young lady your relationship to whom was established at an unusually tender age (nine for both of you was the figure I was given at a recent trade luncheon). Wouldn't it be in your own best interests, not to mention those of the lady's husband, to clear up the suspicion of any irregularity on this score? Perhaps a small ad in *Publishers' Weekly* would do the trick.

Finally, though we admire the ingenuity with which you have found so many words that rhyme (I would not have thought there were so many), each of our readers felt that the scheme was somewhat wearying in the stretch (imagine if they had had to read the whole thing!). Would biographical sketches of the real-life characters, printed in prose at the end of each canto, provide a change of pace?

Again, my profoundest regrets. We suggest that you enter your MS in the Yale Press Younger Poets Contest, which specifically encourages submissions from previously unpublished poets like yourself (are you under 40, the age limit for entrants? Sometimes you don't sound it).

Ciao,
Ed.



Dear Mr. Shakespere:

(Have I got the name right? I can't tell, from your signature, whether you use a second *a*. This is one reason why typewritten submissions are always advisable.)

Forgive me for taking so long over what is, after all, a comparatively short manuscript, your *Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (why Denmark?), but I was unaccountably slow in articulating what I now rea-

lize has always been my unconscious objection to it: It's been done.

I have principally in mind, of course, Sophocles' tragedy on the life of Oedipus. In addition, however, there are all the manuscripts I receive, day after day, that deal with a young man's attachment to his mother. (How old is Hamlet? He acts like a child, but apparently he's over 30. Though God knows there's nothing odd about that combination *these* days.) You, no doubt, are such a young man yourself, tied to the apron-strings of a domineering parent or wife, unable to cut loose and strike out on a life of your own, and to you this is the only situation with dramatic import. But you can appreciate, I hope, how bored I am with it.

Aside from its hackneyed subject, your play has serious, perhaps crippling, limitations. For instance, I found your whole treatment of the question of whether Hamlet's uncle did or did not murder Hamlet's father exasperating in the extreme. The first act is devoted to establishing this guilt on the basis of the testimony of the victim himself, and the remaining four acts are devoted to the pretense that the testimony is unreliable. This is not sound dramaturgy (compare Sophocles' admirable directness!), nor is it considerate of the audience's patience, which I venture to say will not hold out past the second soliloquy (of which there are far too many. Why not cut out the one that begins "Oh, that this too solid flesh would melt"?).

This willfulness is especially annoying in your treatment of the personality of Hamlet. I have already cited my confused feelings regarding his age (you can't expect the members of the audience to stop, in the middle of the graveyard scene, and do arithmetic in their heads! Why not have one of the characters — Rosencrantz or Guildenstern, perhaps — wish him happy birthday at some point, with a reference to the number of winters on his head, or something?), and this confusion extended to other matters. Is he or isn't he mad? Why keep *me* in doubt about it? Frankly, I had the impression that you were padding the play with notebook material too private and offbeat to use elsewhere. Five acts is too long anyway. Dinner beforehand is too early and supper afterwards is too late. And is he or is he not a woman-hater? (Ophelia's songs are lovely, by the way. Why don't you try sending them separately to some of the quarterlies that print this sort of thing?) Is he or is he not a man of action? If he is, why does he read so much (he's apparently a Ph.D. dropout from Wittenberg)? If he's not, why does he fence so well?

To sum up, I found the play a hodgepodge of autobiography and fantasy futilely in search of a hero. There's no end of good stuff in it, but it wants craftsmanship. I was puzzled, at first, as to why you would submit a play to a book publisher, but I understood the reason when I came to the play-within-a-play scene. This is the bookish sort of thing I would expect from a young man who has been unable to get himself some practical theatrical experience. The scene is remote, overstylized and prolix — unplayable, in fact, as you yourself will realize when you have had the responsibility of riveting

July, 1966

the attention of the restless, pleasure-seeking contemporary audience. Why not get yourself some honest-to-goodness greasepaint know-how in one of the provincial theatres that are springing up all over — leave your family in the East, if necessary — then come back to New York and look me up? I wager you'll have learned a great deal about cutting your coat according to your cloth.

Meanwhile, best wishes,
The Editor

Leonard Conversi
New Haven, Conn.

ON MEETING-WITH . . .

The power of a preposition is reflected convincingly by the repetition today in print and on the air of an expression hardly used a few years ago, before the heyday of big government, big press conferences, and big imagery had arrived.

Newscasters advise over and over, and newspaper leads echo, that the President is meeting-with or has met-with or is going to meet-with this Senator, Congressman, friend, or foreign leader to wrestle with the world's problems. (While LBJ may be the all-time champ, the late President Kennedy was no slouch at meeting-with people either — so said the fourth estate.) Vice-President Humphrey, for his peripatetic part, probably has met-with every man, woman, and child over 12 in the whole U.S. at least once in his career. And on the Republican side, while likeable Ike was the nation's merriest meet-wither not so long ago, Dick Nixon certainly must be considered top hail-fellow-well-met-with for the nonce.

The fact is that statesmen of all persuasions from every corner of the earth have been meeting-with one another and the public-at-large ever more incessantly in recent years. If we may believe the reporters, there's hardly a politician left anywhere who simply and straightforwardly *meets* either his peers, his opponents, or, for that matter, any people at all.

"King X announced today he will meet tomorrow afternoon in his mountain retreat at Y with opposition leaders to pursue a solution to this riot-torn country's constitutional impasse," a foreign correspondent will cable. And from Washington will come the scoop: "Reliable sources indicate the President met unexpectedly at the White House Friday night, soon after arriving back from Texas, with key aides and legislators who are spearheading the drive to get his Z bill out of committee by Thanksgiving."

Apologists will extol the journalistic merits of this new terminology, which does sometimes enable all 5 W's and an H to be squeezed into one sentence with minimum strain on the writer's grammar-control-center. But its implications can scarcely meet with approval from anyone who enjoys the nuances, as well as the naked meaning, of our language. Inevitably, something has been lost in watering down the time-honored

practice of just plain *meeting*. But just what is that something?

Alas! one is tempted to postulate that direct confrontations of men and ideas (man-to-man exchanges, we were wont to call them) are becoming outdated. Too often these modern meetings-with seem to lack the substance by which we might prefer our era's historic, or even less-than-historic, interchange of opinion to be characterized.

It's everyday stuff now for opposing politicians to take patient turns talking about the issues-of-the-day over TV or from public platforms. (But when did you last hear a real, rip-snorting political debate where ideas clashed and clanged rather than just clapping hands?) And it's getting to be equally routine for delegates of this or that alliance to confer at exhaustive length only to spawn a communique that pleases none of them — yet is billed as a diplomatic triumph. (Its chief virtue, the press will observe, is to have prevented latent differences from coming to the surface and jamming the delicate machinery of international cooperation.)

Now, I'm all for politeness and diplomacy and compromise — even if they occasionally mean my side will have to go more than halfway to reach a workable solution. But it seems to me that too many contemporary political men, abetted by format-journalists who put style before precision and pith, may by their deeds and dialogue be slowly easing the art of *really-meeting* into oblivion.

Thus the grammatical trend toward meeting-with, seemingly so small a detail, could be important out of all proportion, and the insidious prepositioning of the verb may only coincide with, and express in words, a growing emphasis on form in human dealings at the cost of sincerity and substance.

Perhaps one can grasp the full significance of the point just by trying to imagine that spade-tongued Lawrence Spivak has been fired from his regular Sunday television stint and that the program he made famous is to be called henceforth "Meet *with* the Press".

There. See what I mean?

Jeff Corydon III
Bethesda, Maryland



ON WAR

War is essentially a matter of domestic policy — it is the primary means of disciplining its own populace; therefore war is often a manifestation of the people's discontent with the State.

To have a war to begin with, there need not be a foe. It is enough to have enmity between government and its own people. The single role of government is to silence its people: the same critiques of government made lawfully by the populace in peacetime are treasonous in time of war.

Thus does government silence the people. Where a

war is unpopular and too many utter seditious statements, the wise government increases its draft rather than seem to persecute its own children: those continuing the protest in uniform are the more readily silenced by quiet court-martial than by public trial.

War relies on drafting the youngest and, being the youngest, those who know least: tell them it is a war-for-peace or for the good-of-God and they will not question. War can be efficacious in getting rid of delinquency by, first, drafting those with demonstrated tendencies toward law-breaking and placing them in the most dangerous operations. Active combat militates against the physical unfitness of a rich nation's youth, which deteriorates with easy living. Combat operations also serve to train and prepare that vast manpower regularly required at the home-front for service as policeman, militia, correction officers, guards and executioners.

It is most important to designate a foe which is different in appearance, complexion, build, language and culture so as to avoid any interchange or communication between the two sides; in order, on the one hand, to avert the discovery of common interests and, on the other, guarantee that partisans do not shoot their own by mistake — it is for this reason that civil wars are impractical in that one side constantly confuses its fellows with the enemy disguised.

A brief all-out war is politically and economically unsound. There will not have been the proper conditioning of the populace on a graduated scale, resulting in great political upheavals toward the war's conclusion to expiate the people's outrage at having been taken by storm. Short wars are generally not conducive to profit while lengthily 'limited' ones can maintain a stable wartime economy indefinitely at maximal trading volume of both military *and* non-military commodities.

*J. Natale-Regina
Floral Park, N. Y.*

VIVE EGALITE!

During the late twentieth century many residents of the United States were not ashamed to confess that they found life intensely boring. All questions which had agitated the country for many years had been apparently settled — if not completely satisfactorily, at least after a fashion. There was not even much more than a polite yawn when Alabama elected a Negro to the United States Senate. Some people understandably wished for the "good old days." A junior attending the University of California at Berkeley found the lack of controversy so trying that he finally made for the Golden Gate bridge and won brief fame by fighting off a patrolman to go over the rail.

Into this rut of inertia there appeared in the newspapers one day a brief paragraph which announced that a man with the unbelievable name of Girolamo Savonarola Queen, identified as an attorney in the Middle West, had filed a suit in Federal court demanding that the teams comprising the big leagues of baseball

should be required to transfer players among themselves until they had reached theoretical equality. The item did not so state but the public learned that he was also a lay minister in a sect called the Primitive Apostles, sometimes shortened to Primitives.

After the first news of the suit there was a long period of silence. Even the sports columnists had not seemed to notice the item or to indulge in any derisive comments as is ordinarily the custom of such persons. For months the silence continued, then one day the teletypes began to click out the news that the Federal court in St. Louis had recognized the merit of Queen's suit by issuing a decree that the big leagues must forthwith take steps to reach a basis for equality. There was consternation, especially in the leading teams which were then far enough ahead to be sure of being entitled to the World Series bonanza. However, the baseball attorneys immediately appealed the whole thing to the Supreme Court and hoped with some skepticism for the best.

The presentation of the arguments before the high court was a dull affair and not even the press could make anything else of it. The judges took the case under advisement and no one expected that any change would develop in the sports system. However, one morning the court announced its decision. In the words of the Chief Justice, sometimes called the "lawless wonder" since he had never practiced law but had received his appointment because of his success as campaign manager for the then president whose election had supposedly ushered in the Great Millenium, "the major baseball leagues are directed to present after speedy deliberation a plan which will make all clubs approximately equal and prevent a monopoly of the ability to win."

There was consternation among managers. They were ball strategists, not mathematicians, and although they knew that each team used nine players at a time and played a minimum of eight and one half innings, weather conditions permitting, they were aghast at the enormity of the problem which the court had dumped upon them.

When confusion was at its apex a concern called the Interplanetary Think Gadget Corporation (ITG) offered its services. As its executive sales manager explained the situation to the bewildered baseball men the problem was really one of astonishing simplicity. All that was necessary, he said, was to put the complete record of each player on a punched card, including such things as his batting and fielding averages, his age and possible remaining term of usefulness, with such other items as his marital status, his tendency to have a drink in the evening, taking care not to fold, spindle or mutilate the cards. These cards would be run through one of the Think Gadgets to obtain the total strength of the leagues. Then dividing this theoretical figure by the number of players it would be possible to know the strength which each team must have to be equal.

Since no one had presented an alternative the baseball clubs accepted the plan. The data was assembled

and the enormous Think Gadget began to whirl. In a matter of seconds the complicated result had emerged. It had what baseball managers considered some very dubious points. For example, one heavy hitter was to play on all teams, spending one day at a time on nine teams, then giving the tenth team two days of service. Since this meant that eleven days would be necessary for him to complete the circuit it was also feared that the total number of games played during the season should be a multiple of eleven.

The sales manager upon presenting the plan which the machine had produced said flatly, "Theoretically this should result in all teams ending the season with a percentage of .500 or tied for first place. However, it would hardly be wise to guarantee such a result."

The plan was accepted by the court, the Chief Justice taking the liberty of complimenting the Interplanetary Think Gadget Corporation (ITG) on its logic and simplicity, and ordering it to be put into effect at the start of the next season. At that time complications began to happen. For example, the player who rotated from club to club was found to be allergic to air travel and was often too upset to be of any value to the team with which he was supposed to appear. A young recruit who had been expected to add strength to the weakest team suddenly developed a case of mumps and could not play for several weeks during which the team lost twenty straight games, including a double header. At no time after the first month were any two teams tied and when the end finally came the winners led easily.

"What's become of the Interplanetary Think Gadget Corporation (ITG)?" a reporter asked one of the managers at the beginning of the World Series.

"I understand that it's shifted headquarters to Cuba."

*Garrett B. Holloway
Forest Grove, Oregon*

CHERUB PSYCHOLOGY?

"A loud noise with a dirty neck,
The second chance for a parent.
A beam of sunlight from the Infinite and Eternal
with possibilities of virtue and vice—
but as yet unstained."

Lyman Abbott

Is the child to be considered flesh, bones, muscles, and blood or an angelic creature?

Child Psychology is by definition the branch of psychology that deals with the behavior and mental processes of children. Another and perhaps more accurate definition would be: Child Psychology is concerned with the origin and development of the human individual from the moment of conception through puberty.

According to Webster's fourth and fifth definitions a Cherub is (A) a person, especially a child, with a sweet innocent face and (B) an innocent or lovely child.

Thus, Cherub Psychology is a pseudoscience that is subscribed to by some parents, which has to do with the study, treatment and guidance of a particular child in order to preserve his innocence, shelter him from

any incident and/or thing that isn't considered ideal by his parents, and maintain (for him) a perpetual state of childhood.

Are we to analyse a child in an attempt to understand him, to cultivate his mental growth and install in him morals, to prepare for adulthood? Or shall we place our idol upon a pedestal, humbly go each day to his temple (nursery) and pay homage to the divine creature?

It is a particular trait of our society to classify character or personality. It would be well to remember that before types, are individuals. This is especially true of children. Each child is unique and should be treated as such; however, a parent should remember that while his child is unique, he is in no way superior to other children *per se*.

Many children are unknowing victims of their parents; for example, the father who says "I'm going to give my kids the things I never had," or as exemplified in the words of Anne Campbell,

"You are the trip I did not take;
You are the pearls I cannot buy;
You are my blue Italian lake;
You are my piece of foreign sky."

While such parents can say truthfully and in clear conscience, "I want my child to be happy," the question arises, about whom is the parent concerned—the child or himself? Such statements, given in the proper (or improper) context, are vicarious in nature. In contrast Tolstoy wrote, "Children are a torment nothing else." Emerson characterized them succinctly as, curly dimpled lunatics. One could assume from such apothegms that they considered parents to be the victims.

I maintain that there is no need for *anyone* to be victimized. The obvious solution for the maintenance of an ideal parent-child relationship and the abolishment of those dilemmas is that ever-popular word, compromise.

The parent should think of his child as something special because he is, yet recognize that *all* other children are special too. The parent is not to place his child on the proverbial pedestal, nor is he to consider his offspring as a lowly, bothersome thing, as do Tolstoy and Emerson.

*Theodore W. Barrows
Cleveland, Ohio*

INTERNAL REVENUE — SCHEDULE X

In a recurrent dream I carry with me
a child howling, in jellied gasoline,
Children and napalm, a nursery of bombs,
burnt, burning.
I have borne in this taxable year, and lost
three hundred burning children.

Mother, infanticide, chief mourner,
we pay our dues, and then we pay our dues.

Judith Eisenstein

The Mistake

Curtis Harnack

"Daddy!" said Luke's child, running toward me from the kitchen without looking up. He threw his arms around my knees, and in that second of intimacy was extending a trust so deep that discovery of his mistake, I knew, would seem a betrayal on *my* part. I grinned and patted his blond hair. The others, drinks in hand, smiled at the incident and kept on talking. Luke was next door in the TV room, and many of the guests, full of dinner and languid from the wine, were sitting on the floor, dreamily waiting for him to begin his first ballad. I could see some of the men, and the girls with their skirts fanned across their feet; but I couldn't see Luke. Even before the boy looked up at me, I had guiltily sought a glance from his father.

"You're not my Daddy!" He jumped away, bewildered.

"Silly, that's Lyle," said Karen from the kitchen. The boy's mother had seen it all.

"What's his name?" I asked.

"Joey."

"Joey," I said, to stop him from fleeing, to keep the tears out of his eyes — to make amends for what I'd done to him. "Hello."

Karen laughed, and we looked at each other. The business lent a queer intimacy to us, though this was the first time I'd met her, the first evening Luke had invited me to his home. The tired, stretched look of her face, which gave her mouth such an unhappy expression, was suddenly gone as she smiled. She was pretty, more as she must have looked fifteen years ago. There was something puzzlingly archaic about her. She was one of those girls whose image of prettiness is fixed in high school, when the first lipstick is like raspberry treacle, when curls adorn the head as if the coiffed glory of womanhood had never been discovered before. She was still trying to keep that illusion, and her ruffy sprig-print dress with its junior-miss skirt seemed too young for her. There was also something desperate in her eyes.

The boy scooted into the kitchen, where Karen and two friends were cleaning up the mess made by the shore-dinner, which had been flown in from Boston. Since Luke and Karen were both from New Hampshire, they liked to entertain their Midwestern friends this way. Anybody who didn't go for lobsters and clams had better stay home and stick to pork and potatoes, had better confess to being hopelessly provincial.

I leaned against the lintel as the women laughingly comforted Joey and tried to pull him out of Karen's skirt. Luke and I with our moustaches looked alike at first glance, they observed. We were both tall, dark-

haired, slim, and tonight were identically garbed in khakis and thick tan sweaters. I wondered if they were chattering away in order to reassure Karen that the kid was normal. I didn't know much about stages of development in children, having none of my own, and although Joey looked about as big as a six year old should, there was a timidity about him that made me wonder.

Luke began singing softly, almost in a monotone, as if his Australian moustache strained out the immoderate notes. Karen's helpers went in to hear better, and Karen and I sat down to what was left of the coffee, while Joey put his head in her lap and sucked his thumb. She talked about the mistaken notions children sometimes get — and told of her own early years in Derry, a personal history that had to be related in a



flat, well-modulated voice precisely because it had rasped her life into this smooth, dull shape. She wanted to make herself eccentrically interesting, and so revealed to me what would normally have been reserved for a later time and a greater intimacy. She described her father, a pompous high school band instructor, and how awful she used to feel when he'd dress up in a blue and gold band uniform and skip alongside his marching platoon in a parade, coaching the performance and shouting directions. He was also a buffoon at home, to her mother's despair, and she was driven to tearful sipping of any strong liquor she could lay her hands on. "That was our family secret — mother's drinking. Those packages of Sen-Sen around the house didn't fool anybody. The whole town knew. Me, the only child — I got the brunt of it." She set down her coffee cup, still without looking at me, the whole tale having come out as she stared at an electrical outlet just to the right of my elbow. I had the feeling she'd performed this piece before.

And what account of his childhood would Joey tell, twenty years from now — and to whom? And for what reason?

"I had musical talent from Dad's side, perfect pitch and all, but just because *he* wanted me to do something

with it, I wouldn't. I'd learn an instrument in a week, make it speak for me in that impersonal, beautiful way they do — you know? Like their muteness was only temporary. They were just abiding their silence, till I blew them or strummed them to life. Then I'd never play 'em again."

"Why?"

"I preferred to paint. Probably because I didn't have any talent in that direction at all. You understand me now, don't you?" She smiled, not a burst of pleasure, but a slow, pulled smile, and our eyes met. I knew fully what she was up to, and that we had already begun with it.

Joey uncorked his mouth and dashed up the backstairs to his room. She scarcely seemed to notice he was gone. Now would come the disclosures about her present life: Joey — he'd been a mistake, one of those ironic gifts from the gods just as they'd been about to split up; and Luke, he'd sunk away into some world of his own; she was left alone — and it was terrible.

I didn't have to hear these tales. I sensed them coming. They'd told me them before, these tense married women edgy with hungers which were seldom sexual to start with. I took their opening confessions as part of the gambit, not especially significant except as it *seemed* to lend a note of intimacy. It was not me, my special self, who moved them, but only what I represented to their eyes: a man uncaught by domestic



circumstances, who understood the meaning of a covert glance and could figure out something to do about it. The dialogue to come would be interchangeable with talk I'd heard before. There had to be a salving of various guilts for girls like Karen — "good" girls from respectable homes — who'd carry bourgeois values through life with them, at the same time they cuckolded their husbands, lied to their infants, and stole from the emotional exchequers of everyone in sight.

I was sorry the newest girl-in-the-offing involved my friendship with Luke, however. I've never gone in for kicks gotten through deceptions of this kind. On the contrary, it would be hard not to have the whole thing spoiled, since I'd grown fond of him. We'd met at a

poker game when I'd been asked to fill-in for an office acquaintance who was sick. A group played regularly Thursday nights in Des Plaines, a thirty minute trip from my North Side apartment. That first night, whenever Luke was dealer he'd call for Black Bottom — whoever had the highest spade shared the pot with the winner — and three times he and I divvied up the take. It was one of those weird coincidences that set one talking, and afterward I learned he was a sportsman, too. It was Armistice Day and the pheasant season over in Iowa had just started; we agreed to drive west to see what we could chase up in the cornfields around Mason City, where I had some relatives.

As with so many men our age (late thirties, early forties), the thing we never discussed was our respective jobs, what we did during those nine-to-five days of our lives which we consigned to the marketplace, days of hostage for the sake of our leisure and fun. All I knew was that Luke was an industrial designer, that he'd gone to Cranston on the last of his G.I. Bill after the war and that his dream had been to become a sculptor. I'd seen some of his plaster-of-Paris objects fashioned then, all of them expressive of a borrowed agony in the modern mode: cowering heads behind bony hands, taffy-limbed figures with ravaged faces set too far back on the spine, and holes all over them. They were embarrassingly second-hand; Henry Moore passed through some instructor at Cranston.

Anyhow, while living in Detroit, he'd made friends among the artists working for the big automobile companies, and he did some drafting for them. "He liked the money," said Karen to me now, as she hit this stage of her story, "and I had to remind him that if he truly intended to become a sculptor, he shouldn't be swayed by the first commercial paycheck to come his way. I mean, I wondered how deeply he felt he'd been *called* — how serious he was."

Back in their undergraduate days at Durham, they'd talked at length of just such a possible juncture: when one reached the point of either living and acting according to one's convictions and beliefs, or gave up the pretensions. They'd only been married a year — they had no children, and a little money; they wouldn't be risking much by going to Paris "and really seeing this thing through." There, in a little hotel off the Rue St. Michel where they lived, and in the Luxembourg Gardens where they strolled in the evenings, and at the Cafe des Chauffeurs where they ate as often as they could, they were able to parlay the atmosphere of "promise" for nearly eighteen months. Still, nothing much happened one way or another.

"The worst of it was, I didn't think he really *cared* enough — you know what I mean? Not like the others we drank Pernod with. But maybe it was Paris that was the mistake — not Luke. Maybe it was these urban types and their particular intensity. After all, we were from New Hampshire. I figured some rural place like Spain might be more suitable, where you could really be close to ordinary people. Simple, country people — you know? We heard it was cheap and good in Sardinia, or the Balearic Islands — living on a really out

of the way hunk of nowhere like Ibiza." She obviously prided herself on her well-turned Castilian lisp, in pronouncing *Ibiza*. "But we went to the Azores because we lucked into a cheap freighter voyage."

I had heard Luke tell how they'd trekked to a remote island which could only be reached by hired launch. Once there, they hauled fresh water in cans from a spring high up a mountain. They lived in a stucco hut with a hole in the top for the smoke and subsisted on a diet of fish and fruit. Luke soon developed a nasty skin disease that spread all over him, and when they couldn't find adequate treatment locally, they packed up and returned to America. He'd had his run of adventure, his fling. "It was the bit, you know," he'd say. "How we all felt." Perhaps only his guitar-playing revealed the lingering sense of various undefined losses, but an acceptance of those losses. He was settled now and no longer fought the issue.

Karen did, however, and that's where I came in. "And you?" she asked. "What notions of yourself have you been forced to throw away?"

"Oh, if you're going to put it *that* way . . ."

"No, I just meant, as part of growing up. The difference between being a child and getting some maturity, some perspective on oneself and —"

"Come on," I smiled, "that's not what you mean at all." I lowered my voice. "How's it with me, you want to know. In *every* way."

"Yes."

"And you expect me to tell the truth?"

"I won't believe it, if you don't."

"Has Luke ever said anything about my past — about me?"

"No, you're utterly safe."

"That's not the point." I turned, at the scurrying sound on the back stairs.

"Joey! Now what is it?"

"Where's my mannikins?"

"Oh, that mannikins! Can't you be anywhere without him? Look in your toybox. Though I suppose that's the last place he'd likely be. You sure you didn't take him up to bed with you?"

Joey was already under-cover of that excuse, peeking out from it — half forgetting it — as he observed me. "Nothing's happening," I said. "We're all still here. You're not missing anything, Joey. You can go back to bed."

"*There's* your mannikins — in the magazine rack."

Joey ran into the midst of the party, retrieved the rag doll, and, just as a murmur of greeting rose to meet him, escaped up the rear stairs again. Karen poured us more coffee. The very act, so homely and simple, seemed to strengthen her bond with me: she was already ministering to my needs. "And we were saying?"

"Not much, I guess. Luke didn't tell you I was divorced?"

She tried not to show how much this interested her.

"It was some time ago — one of those early marriages that didn't pan out. Four and a half years of it, to be exact, and I must admit they were generally happy

ones for both of us, though the whole thing was pretty much a mistake."

"So what happened?"

"Who's to say? I met her in Beirut on holiday when I was stationed in Morocco — foreign service. She and another government secretary were vacationing there too, up from Abadan. So you might say it was a spur-of-the-moment business. But then I've never felt the calculated moves, when it comes to the emotions, are to be trusted. If you can't act on impulse, what's the use?"

She began to blush. "Go on."

"Do you know the Secretary of State himself had to approve the marriage — personally? That surprised me. You'd think he'd have more important business to attend to. Or maybe it was just to flatter me, make me feel part of one big diplomatic family. I was able to wangle another tour of duty in Marrakesh. Then we packed up and left for Washington, to wait out the next assignment, which was likely to be South America. Things started getting rocky. She decided she wanted a permanent home, a kind of continuity of life she'd never have with me. She brooded about the unsanitary conditions in all those countries, for raising children."

"*'She,'* only *'she'?* What was her name?"

"Dorothy."

"That's better."

"Well, there's no use going into it. I'd only give you *my* version, which over the years has been pounded pretty smoothly into shape."

"Why so?"

"Because nobody can live with the ragged-edge of any experience. In memory, at least, it has to be firm and in place."

"Oh?"

"Only the future can remain blurry and unformed — never the past."

"You *are* a philosopher."

"No, but I know what I think — and *why*, alas."

"I think it's more simply a question of hope." She put another lump of sugar in her coffee. We could hear Luke singing a chain-gang ballad, one of his favorite hammer songs. It was not about hope.

"So was Dorothy happier, when you quit your job and moved to Chicago?" This much of my story she knew: that I was vice president of a management consulting firm specializing in foreign investments. "You had to travel didn't you? You had to be away?"

"But on short trips, usually. It was Chicago she hated. I mean, that's what *she* thought was the trouble. We tried it in town, we tried it in Wilmette. Then I got my first really big assignment — to Turkey, and the company of course didn't allow travel expenses for the wife. We'd just bought a house and didn't have any spare cash. The trip was not supposed to last over two months and we thought *we* could last, though maybe we were both actually relieved to have the decisive break taken out of our hands. You know? She as much as me. Anyhow, as soon as I landed in Ankara, dipping down over the mountains right onto the runway — probably the scariest airport in the world —

I felt terribly excited. And free. Smelling that Moslem world again — the charcoal, the dust — I felt as if I'd slipped entirely out of my American life, had 'gone over.' I don't know, it's hard to explain. London, Paris, almost any city in Europe, you're still half in America. But not out there. Our first letters were daily exchanges, but as time went on, our lives did too. The stuff we said in letters began to be more and more remote from the actual skin of our affairs. One night there was the inevitable wild party, and I took home a German girl. Well, I didn't set much stock by it, being drunk and all. At least, not at first. As a matter of fact, I didn't see *her* again . . ."

"But there were others?"

"You know how these things go." And do you? I thought, looking directly at her. She met my gaze with a flash of interest, or was she alarmed that I was on to her this quickly? Had she been unfaithful to Luke before, or was this to be her first mistake?

"And you kept on with the letters home, 'from your devoted spouse,' and all that?"

"Wouldn't you know, pretty much the same thing was happening to Dorothy. Only being a woman, she couldn't help but make something big of it."

"Ha!"

"Honestly, I didn't mean to pun. She wasn't pregnant or anything. It's just that she had to make it the romantic adventure of her life. She went off with the guy, divorced me in Alabama, and married this bloke good and proper."

"And lived happily ever after?"

"I won't even give you three guesses on that. One will do."

"You don't see her?"

"Lord, no."

From the next room we heard Luke singing, his baritone voice thin but clear:

Didn't know what to do with their big barefeet,
Didn't know what to do with their big barefeet,
Oh, didn't know what to do with their big barefeet!

He whacked the guitar and shouted:

Shame, shame on the Johnson boys!

There followed immediate laughter, applause, and a burst of talk. In a few minutes the little boy, in his white flannel sleeping suit, pushed open the door of the back stairs and ran up to Karen. "What's happening?"

"Nothing but the singing. What's the matter with you tonight?"

He looked queerly at me. He wasn't particularly interested in a drink of water, though that's what he got, and he drank it earnestly, staring at me over the rim. Karen pulled him onto her lap and he straddled her knee. Only children can look this judgingly at adults, I thought. Life has not clouded their pure gaze, their expectations of perfection. Surely Joey sensed nothing between his mother and me, but I couldn't help but supply that blue-eyed stare with the meaning it might someday bear.

"But did you love her?" she asked. "Your wife?"

They were always so interested in that first sister of theirs, always wanted to know what she looked like, how she dressed, what she said — wanted, in fact, to line her up with some dormitory-type from college days. Karen acted now as if she were being the confidante to a harried male who'd come to her with problems. It seemed to have nothing much to do with *us*. Except that once the mood of revelations had belled out into silence and half-smiles, we'd have reached the point where one of us might say something about fate or destiny or the powers-that-be, and how our small histories constantly weave in and out. Strange that we should now be put together here in the kitchen, coffee cups between us. The marvel of it was true enough, and the nod to the cosmos was surely for luck — and perhaps justification. "Let's go downstairs and put on a record," I said.

"Off you go!" She gave Joey an affectionate slap on his rear as she sent him away.

In the basement they had a large, vinyl-floored rec room with a bar at one end and a library at the other. She put on a piece of Dixieland jazz, but our immediate embrace had little to do with the music. We held each other in a frank, physical way, and moved slowly around the big empty room. "You didn't answer me. Upstairs," she said.

"About loving her?"

"You don't like that word, do you?"

"Do *you*?"

"Don't switch me off that way."

They always wanted to be sure I'd been deeply in love, the wound sharp and unassuageable, all these years . . . until this very night when something miraculous was about to happen, some cobweb film would be applied, the healing would begin. In joy I would come back to life, my recovery due solely to this beautiful woman in my arms. "Yes, I loved her, but I was new at the business then."

"What do you mean?"

"I didn't know how easily one could be mistaken." My lips were on her temple. I liked the smell of her hair and the perfume she used — just the scent I would expect: something kitchen-cookery, nothing too musky. Dainty and clean. Was this her idea of herself, or what she thought would please Luke? The sad thing was, perhaps she hadn't considered that these were separate questions.

The songfest upstairs began to break up and the guests soon descended the narrow stairs. I held her firmly and we went on with our dance, till the music ended, though she wanted to flee at the first sign of people. Immediately, I knew that Karen was not used to this sort of thing. The knowledge unsettled me. I didn't like to think of myself as a home-breaker. If I hadn't come here tonight, if Joey hadn't taken me for his father, would any of this have happened?

Luke hurried up to us. "I've got to bring down ice. Everybody needs a drink. And now the kid's screaming. Didn't you hear him? He practically drowned me out."

"He's *terrible* tonight. I don't know what's the matter with him," said Karen. "You'd think he'd never seen strangers in the house before."

"You've both got plenty to do. Let *me* go up," I said. "If I can't quiet him down — then one of you come."

So, I put the two of them together again; even at the time, I wondered why.

I expected to get a blast of alarm from Joey, once he saw me loom on the staircase — the chopper-come-to-chop-off-your-head, mounting toward his room. But he seemed pleased to have commanded an adult's attention, his mother's favorite guest, at that. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Don't you remember?"

"No."

"Downstairs — a while ago — you took me for your Daddy. And then your mother said I was Lyle."

"No." He sat cross-legged on the green shaggy carpet, a little animal in the grass, not shy as a rabbit, but willing to take me on. "No."

"Well, that's me — Lyle."

"Do you know how to play marbles?" He said it with a look of guile, as if he'd cleaned-up the block.

"Sure." I stretched out full length while he poured black and white marbles from a mesh bag. "Where'd these come from? A Chinese checkers game?"

"No."

"All black and all white," I began, "that makes it easy to tell sides, anyhow. Mine are the black, you're the white. Okay? Now let's each give up eight marbles. We'll make a circle. Like this. Now you take one of yours for the shooter — and try to hit one of 'em out of the circle. Your shooting line is *here*." I drew my finger across the carpet, upending the pile. "Mine's here. Is this the way *you* play marbles?"

"No."

"Well, it's like this. You can start shooting. As long as you hit, you keep on shooting. But if you miss it's my turn." I lay back and watched the easy way he slipped into a concentrated playing of the game. Then I began to mull over what I was getting into, in this household, and the first heavy feelings of unhappiness came over me. But was I to blame? Any other man who came along would find what I had found, would do what I'd been doing, and was about to do.

I hardly gave attention to the fact that little Joe was cheating craftily, shooting from a point way forward of his line and copping marbles he hadn't even nicked, let alone knocked out of the circle. The longer I said nothing, the more purposeful became his deception. At last he'd won all the marbles. "Well, I guess you're too good at that game. I never even got a chance to play."

He laughed greedily, a wicked look on his cherub-soft face.

"Maybe we ought to try a different version of marbles. You're too good at this one. What game do you know?"

He began to sing-song, making up a set of rules as he went along; I nodded with half a mind, slipping

again into my thoughts, while he prolonged his cradle-song of marbledom. Then he took the first shot and quietly proceeded to bag all the marbles. Such roguishness began to interest me. "Now stop! That's enough. It's my turn."

He let me shoot once, but then said I'd committed some serious error, which would cost me five marbles. The marbles were each worth a nickel, so now I owed him a quarter. "If you don't hit anything this next time, you owe me a dollar."

"I do, huh?" I shot but missed entirely.

"Now I'm supposed to get a dollar from you." He had established a third-person authority, as if we were submitting ourselves to some impartial law. "If I hit," he went on, "then I'll get five more dollars from you."

"What *are* these rules?"

"That's the game."

"But you're making them up yourself, as we go along."

He grinned. "We can play something else, if you want."

Luke came up the stairs, pausing near the top. I held up my hand to stop him there.

"Pick any number between one and ten," said Joey. "And you'll win five dollars."

"Seven."

"That's not the number."

"Five."

"That's not the number."

"Two."

"That's not the number."

"Three."

"That's not the number."

"One."

He shook his head, his lips ballooning over his teeth as he tried to keep from exploding.

"Four, eight, nine, ten! No?"

"There *isn't* any number." He rolled on the floor, laughing convulsively.

Luke swooped down and lifted Joey into the air. "Enough of this gambling — back to bed."

Joey did not protest with anything more vigorous than a sigh, and he didn't even look over his shoulder at me.

"Did he teach you some new games?" Luke said, as we descended the stairs.

"I don't know — maybe. I guess the kind I've always played."

Luke asked me what I was drinking. I told him I had to leave now but didn't want to spoil the party by breaking things up. My coat was right there in the hall. "Good-night to Karen for me, huh?"

"Sure."

"See you next Thursday."

"Or — I'll give you a ring." I walked out of the house by the back door.

"Don't forget," he said, but I didn't answer.

Who Will Save The Evergreens?

B. Canary Van Lare

"Dear Lord Jesus," he prayed, *this is Francis H. Hoyt, 238 Combs Avenue, a miserable sinner.*" There had been no sound from the kitchen for a long time now, so it must be about over. Frankie sat up in bed, listened. No, she wasn't crying anymore . . . they must be sitting at the table talking. Either they were talking and pretty soon they would go through the dining room and into their bedroom or else the yelling would start again and then maybe he would hit her some more and then slam the screen door and jump in the convertible and not come back until tomorrow. Maybe he wouldn't come back for two or three days.

Once he couldn't get the car started. He had stumbled over the pots of petunias on the front porch . . . thrown two of them through the window. That was the night the police had come. Frankie was glad they had come, but he had run and jerked on the policeman's hand, screamed, *"Don't shoot him!"* Big, bluecovered arms had picked him up, carried him back into his room and the man sat on the bed next to him and told him they wouldn't shoot his dad, young feller, and he sure was a big boy—about nine or ten?—and, did he play baseball? Frankie said yes he was nine, played right field mostly. They had talked a long time. The two of them sat on Frankie's bed. He remembered the big square hand holding his, the other patting, patting, patting.

By the time the officer was telling him how to tie a thread around the hind leg of a June bug so you could fly him on a leash, everything out in the kitchen was quiet and Mother wasn't lying on the floor in front of the green icebox any more, but was there sitting on the other side of him on the Beautyrest innerspring mattress. Another policeman was standing there saying, "All right, Ma'm, we will leave if you're sure you'll be okay now."

There still was nothing he could hear. Frankie lay back on the pillow, the embroidered scallops of the pillowcase cool, smooth, silky against his cheek. He refolded his hands, *"Dear God, please have him leave pretty soon and not come back at all."*

No, Miss Pauline said that wasn't the way to pray. And she knew. Down at the State Street Church Miss Pauline would sit straight in her chair with all of them in front of her in the red chairs that were too little for them and Frankie would stare at her wide legs while she talked, patted her face with a lace-edged handkerchief. Knotted, grape-like bulges on her ankles sagged over the tops of her black flat-heeled shoes. She would talk about how All Were Miserable Sinners and how we should place our lives in the hands of the Lord because He Knew Best. "We don't tell Him what we need—we just pray, Have Thine Own Way, Lord! Thy Will Be Done!" Well, that made sense, Frankie thought, because after all He was Up There and Knew Every Thought And Deed.

Miss Pauline knew, all right. Not just about praying, either, but lots of things. Like the quart mason jar she brought filled with rubbing alcohol. She had put this chicken gizzard and two livers in it. It stayed on the table where they stacked all the workbooks and hymnals. She would pat her face and her white, pleated neck with the handkerchief, tell them how Your Body Is A Temple and what liquor would do to your insides.

Frankie had won a gold pin for bringing the most Unchurched Neighbors to Sunday School. Of course, most of them really belonged to the Sunshine Class at First Methodist and they had heard temperance preached but they never had seen what happened to your gizzard, so they took turns being Unchurched Neighbors and visiting Miss Pauline's class. Frankie wondered if his Dad's insides were all whitish and shrivelled and sort of bubbly on the edges the way that chicken's was.

He twisted the top button on his pajama shirt around and around. When it came off in his hand, he wondered how many turns it took, methodically twisted the others. It took fifteen turns for the second one, four for the third one and there wasn't any bottom one. Glass crashed in the kitchen. "My God, Frank, what's going to become of us?" his mother screamed. Frankie jumped out of bed. *"Dear-Jesus-Thy-Will-Be-Done-Amen!"* He ran to the bedroom door, turned the white china knob slowly, eased the door open just a crack.

Just then Frank hurled a jar of peaches. It came sailing across the kitchen, through the dining room, just missing the chandelier, but coming close enough to make the tear-dropped prisms shake, jingle. The jar hit the doorframe with a dull, sucking "slup" and the glass and homecanned Elbertas slid down the wall quietly, slowly, uncertainly, onto the gay-flowered rug. Frankie wondered what you used to clean peach syrup off the wallpaper.

"You know how kids are!" Mother would say if Mrs. Snyder or somebody came in while she was cleaning it up tomorrow. Mrs. Snyder would say, "I know,

Honey." His feet felt sticky. The peach juice had splashed and the sweetness coursed down his neck. Leaning against the closed door he watched as the syrup ran down his chest, collected along the drawstring waist of his blue-striped pajamas. He dipped his finger and tasted and remembered he was hungry. But he had to do something about the floor. He got the throwrug spread it out in front of the door over the glass and stickiness so she could get it and wash it in the morning and clean up the floor while he was outside, not washing.

He thought of the fried chicken put away in the green wooden icebox. Wasn't Frank ever going to finish and roar off down the street? There was something to think about. If Frank left and never came back, Frankie wouldn't be riding along with the top down or sitting out in front of the house, steering, flying. He never touched the accelerator or pushed any of the buttons so he could sit in it and drive any time he wanted. Maybe he could go down to the store and sit in the car. Of course, if Frank went away from the house forever, maybe he would go away from the store too. Then Frankie couldn't go in and look around and his dad couldn't reach into the meat case and give him an Armor Star skinless wiener from the rows that marched neatly between little fences of green plastic parsley.

Frankie liked standing in the store eating the wieners. First you licked off the thin streaks of white grease, then you would slide it in your mouth . . . in and out and in and out, resisting the first bite . . . waiting and waiting before you finally bit off the puckered end and tasted the cold sweet goodness.

What would Miss Pauline say if she knew he had prayed Frank wouldn't come back. Maybe she would say, "Be careful what you pray for—you might get it!" She said that a lot. Mother didn't want him to not come back, Frankie knew, because she would always call after him, "Frank, don't go, don't go!" So, maybe it wasn't good at all to think of him being gone forever. The Lord Works In Mysterious Ways His Wonders To Perform.

Boy, he was hungry. He thought of the peaches on the other side of the door. He could open the door and reach right out there. But they were mixed up with that glass and Frankie knew what happened if you ate glass because that is what had happened to his Chow dog, Monk. Someone had fed him hamburger with glass ground up in it. The vomit and blood had run from his mouth and his black tongue had lashed back and forth. Better not eat those peaches. Frankie's stomach tightened while he thought of Monk. His mother had said to Mrs. Snyder, "I sure feel sorry for Frankie, but to tell the truth, I'm glad Monk's gone—he was just ruining my evergreens!"

At first Frankie thought it was funny when she kept getting out the can of Doggie-No-No and sprinkling it all around the little bushes that lined the porch, because he knew it was *not* Monk wetting on them. Then he felt ashamed because she sure did love those bushes and the pots of Fredonia Crimson Star petunias on the

porch and the Heavenly Blue morning glories growing up strings along the back fence. He had to go to the toilet now but he couldn't go through the dining room to the bathroom because Frank wasn't throwing anything or yelling but they were still in there. Frankie had prayed to God to please keep him from wetting on Mother's evergreens ever again.

Now he slipped off the two catches at the bottom of the screen, quietly crawled out the window, dropped onto the grass. It felt wet and prickly as he wiped his feet and squigged his toes to get rid of the peach juice. He turned to go against the brick wall, but kept thinking of the big Blue Spruce at the corner of the house. It was almost six feet tall. Frankie fingered himself, wondered if he could kill a Spruce tree six feet tall. He walked around the house and carefully aimed at the base of the trunk. If it didn't work at the roots, he could try higher up after a while.

When the front door slammed, Frankie flattened himself against the house until he heard the car leave. He ran back, hoisted himself up through his window, leaped into bed. He hadn't had time to fasten the screen but he knew she wouldn't notice when she came in. He sprawled face down, twisted and made a little noise in his sleep when she smoothed his hair and pulled the blue and white quilt over him. She padded through the dining room and Frankie knew tonight it was over when he heard her, without bothering to undress, fall to bed.

Frankie turned over . . . waited . . . watched the street light. He pressed his fingers against his eyelids, saw yellow streaks; pressed hard, harder, let go quickly . . . watched the white spots float. Then he got up, fastened the hooks on the window screen. She wasn't going to clean up the stuff tonight.

Tomorrow Frankie would stay in bed a long time and when he got up and went out to the kitchen, the peaches and everything would be gone. If her face was puffy or her arms bruised he wouldn't see that. He wouldn't say anything but she would say how clumsy she was when Mrs. Snyder came over. Maybe she would mention how she should really throw out those old house slippers because she had fallen down the basement stairs just once too often, and Mrs. Snyder would say, yes, she really ought to throw them away. His stomach growled.

He went into the kitchen without turning on the light. Carefully he opened the icebox door, felt for the plate of fried chicken from supper. The white enamel smell of the interior blended with the food smells. His searching hand dipped into a bowl of stewed rhubarb before it found the chicken. The moonlight streamed through the dotted Swiss curtains, so he could see to avoid the glass, the turned over chairs. He sat watching the moon and flakey crumbs dropped, stuck to the tacky syrup on his chest as he ate. It tasted good. He had got a thigh.

She would clean it all up early tomorrow morning. He would stay in bed until it was almost finished and then there would be pancakes and Mother would laugh at how many he ate.

What Does The Critic Write About?

Leo J. Hertzell

Before I left the campus here in Superior last October to attend the Iowa Center for Modern Letters' first conference, "The Poet as Critic," I got a haircut.

Climbing into the chair, I said, "Lamont, I'm going out of town for a few days."

"Where you going?"

"To Iowa City. A meeting of English teachers."

"I never liked English much in high school," Lamont said. "I never could diagram. Why do English teachers always want you to diagram? I had to go to summer school one year just because of diagramming. I never could do it right."

"I don't really know much about diagramming, Lamont. But I don't think this meeting will have much to do with that. It's more about poetry. There'll be some good poets there."

"Do you want the sideburns evened up a little?" he answered.

The trip from northern Wisconsin to Iowa City in the fall is pleasant. The summer heat and storms are gone. For all of the 450 miles there is a golden tone to the landscape, the autumn sunshine and the fallen leaves, and there are farmers out with machines harvesting the corn. Nearing Iowa City the traveler crosses the Johnson County line and enters what claims to be the largest hog producing county in the United States. Then the railroad tracks and the new Holiday Inn, garish on the left, and an outside vegetable market, golden with pumpkins and squash and jugs of cider, and then Iowa City, split by the river.

The formal conference sessions of "The Poet as Critic" were held in the new ballroom of the Memorial Union, a glazed cube of space with a lobby at one end where a friend and I received identification cardboards from a smiling blond at 8:45 on Friday morning, October 29. In the ballroom, perhaps a thousand folding chairs had been placed in neat rows facing the stage. An aisle had been preserved down the middle and two microphones stood in the aisle, one towards the front of the room and one towards the back, silently waiting for questions from the floor. Half of the chairs were occupied. In the back of the room, near the lobby entrance, clusters of men talked earnestly. A recruiter from a California college, looking pale, wearing a Madras jacket, moved about renewing old friendships and trying to locate dissatisfied Ph.D.s who might try things out west.

"I don't feel too well," he said to my friend. "Hung over. How are things up north? You know, we have some openings; I'd like to find a damned good Shakespeare man . . ."

I wandered off and sat down beside a bearded stranger reading a paper-back.

A few minutes after nine, Elizabeth Sewell was introduced from the stage. British, enthusiastic, witty, Miss Sewell spoke on Coleridge. She seemed to me the sort of speaker one might schedule for a college convocation if one had not yet received tenure.

Next, Richard Ellmann with the high forehead and the genial stage presence spoke on Oscar Wilde. The job of the critic, Ellman quoted Wilde, is to deepen the mystery. Ellmann wandered into the poet as subver-

sive, the poet as a criminal. Oscar Wilde and John Genet. Perhaps the poet must challenge the established order. He sees exciting possibilities. It was a quiet talk with undertones of violence . . . Listening, my mind wandered to my barber's thoughts of English teachers diagramming, and I rather wished Lamont could have been there to hear these disturbing ideas from a most respectable scholar.

There was a break for lunch. Outside of the south entrance to the union three students sat at a table, accepting contributions for a defense fund for another student who had burned his draft card the preceding week and, we were told, was now a prisoner of federal authorities. I walked up the hill to the business district to eat and visit the book stores.

The business district seemed shabby, more run-down than I had remembered it being. But there were the same clusters of hurrying students with books, Amish women in bonnets, farmers in blue overalls, children eating candied apples on sticks. I went in The Paper Place and bought John Hawkes' *Second Skin*, and I stopped for a moment to watch a nun, her conference cardboard stuck securely, sitting on the floor intent on the bottom row of a case filled with modern fiction. The Ecumenical Council has indeed had far reaching effects.

Back to the ballroom at three to hear Ralph Freedman, Professor of English and Chairman of Comparative Literature at Iowa, speak on what was billed as "Stevens and Rilke, Poet-Aestheticians." Professor Freedman is a very learned man, and I understood little of what he said. Occasionally, a phrase or fragment of an idea floated down from the platform and I would catch it and try to examine it, a fragment that sounded like, "When Rilke came to understand the implications in knowing the unknowable, then his image of the angels took on a new dimension, that of seeing one's self as the image is truly reflected in the opaque waters of the subconscious." Probably he didn't say anything like that at all. I couldn't really tell. It was difficult to hear him; the people behind me were restless and talked in loud whispers. Occasionally they mimicked the speaker whom they, too, seemed not to understand. The opaque phrases floated in the air. There were quick strings of abstractions followed by ponderous judgments. If, as Ellmann had suggested, the poet was subversive, Professor Freedman was demonstrating the academic establishment's ability to smother the protest and blunt the vision.

Much later that night, back in my room at the Holiday Inn, I read part of Nelson Algren's *Notes from a Sea Diary*. "Since when does abstracting the life from the poetry entitle a hollow hack to the honorable name of thinker? . . . Literature is made upon those occasions when a challenge is put to the legal apparatus by a conscience in touch with humanity.")

Donald Hall, Donald Justice and George Starbuck read their poetry at nine PM at the University Athletic Club, a kind of academic tavern across the river and beyond the hill from the Union. The poets read to an after banquet audience in a dining room. There were

bearded students with notebooks and some Iowa faculty people and many conference people and the crowd filled all of the chairs and lined the walls and spilled out into the hallway around three sides of the room. At Iowa, someone said, writing is taken seriously, and this was an Iowa audience.

THE DUST

Unable to stop what we were doing,
We tinkered at our metals and climbed old roads.
If we had known the tooth of that devourer,
Would we have stalked with torches through its
mouth?

Traveler, there is nothing now that we can do.
You spread our words, which are our bodies,
They are the ones we taught you not to know.

Milton Gilman

First, George Starbuck, recently from Buffalo where he had led some faculty crusade on behalf of academic freedom, read his polished, brittle poetry with its ironies caught cleverly by a fragile wit. Then Donald Justice, slightly stooped, chain smoking, intense, read with an exhausting force that made me want to shout at him not to give this much to these people or to any people. And then Donald Hall, down on a holiday from Michigan, read half amused at us and, it seemed, at himself, and wandered off into an obscene limerick. Bearded and as much performer as poet, Hall spoke of himself as a bear and read a poem about having flowers in his belly. He seemed an artist out of a Bergman film with an equal capacity for joy and evil.

When Hall sat down, Starbuck rose to add one thing. He read a poem whose title, he said, was too long to read. It was a poem addressed to each member of Congress, each congressman being named in the title. I will issue each of you a poem, said his poem, Burn It! The poem was a rambling, passionate protest against the fire and pain of war. When he finished reading it, he lit the manuscript from his cigarette lighter, and the paper flared and smouldered in front of us like an ignited draft card. Then Justice again with a short poem, concentrated, with a similar theme of protest and a pun on the word Justice. Then he, too, burned the manuscript before us. Then Hall once more. He evaded the protest theme and played with his fellow poets' intensity and then burned a paper, laughing and enjoying himself and smoking a cigar.

We filed out of the tavern into the Iowa night, somehow restless and disturbed by the difference between the stasis of the afternoon's proceedings and the turbulence of things at night. Driving back to the center of town, I talked with my friends, a professor from the University of Minnesota and a man from Quincy who was once a tank commander in North Africa and who now teaches remedial English to faltering high school students.

"Do you think I should fail some of those poor bastards, Leo?" he asked.

"How are they at diagramming?"

Crossing the river and up the hill, we talked of the conference. There were the poets' ironies and burning wit. There was the opaque scholarship. We said there seemed to be a tension. Perhaps. Perhaps the conference was turning into a kind of literary tug of war.

The rumors of tension floated in the Smoky air of Kenney's bar where we speculated on the implications in the burning of the poems and drank the weak Iowa beer. Was it accidental that the scholars and critics spoke in the ballroom but the poets were shunted off to a tavern's dining room at night? Someone said someone had resigned. Someone joined us in the booth and said the scholars were consolidating their positions with the help of expensive re-enforcements.

Poets are hard to manage," said the man from Minnesota. "They adopt unpopular causes and they are sullen. That's why I like them."

I tried to imagine Lamont's reaction to this kind of English teacher talk.

A graduate student joined us and said the poets' burning of the manuscript was a symbolic gesture on behalf of the rebellious student who had burned his draft card.

"It's a protest against more than that," said the man from Quincy.

We left Kenneys and went to Donnellys. Outside The Paper Place two students were sitting at a table collecting funds for the prisoner. Someone gave them a dollar.

Saturday morning, Donald Hall spoke in the ballroom. It was a solid talk grounded in Freudian theories of the creative process. Hall welded the critical process to the creative process. After all, the poet chooses one word, yellow for example, and rejects another, gold for instance. That is a kind of criticism. Is Hall the peace maker I wondered. Will he bring these two together so that we all go home comfortable and satisfied? Perhaps the whole tension bit was just excitement of the night. When the printed proceedings of the conference are available, perhaps I'll read Freedman's speech and see its hidden vitality. But will the printed proceedings carry the poems from the tavern? Will there be a footnote about the fires? Hall finished speaking.

Rene Wellek, Sterling Professor of Comparative Literature at Yale University, brought the conference to a close. Wellek, white haired, smiling, comfortable on the platform before the rows of chairs, every one filled, was introduced by Murray Krieger, Carpenter Professor of Literary Criticism at Iowa and a man, we learned the night before, recently added to the Iowa faculty to strengthen the forces of criticism. Wellek's speech did not avoid the tension. The poet, he said, is never a very good critic; criticism is a special kind of business. Somehow he disposed of Eliot and Ransom and Tate and Jarrell. The speech was learned and touched on

Maritain and pop art and *Voices of Silence* and French critics of the last century. Somehow Wellek suggested that critics have a glimpse into a vast and objective reality of ideal writing that exists in some Platonic scheme and is denied the sight of the mere scribbler who, after all, is occupied with the immediacy of his own limited experience. Wellek was very good.

It seemed that if there had really been a tension, he had dissolved it. The pyrotechnic exhibitions of the troublesome poets in the tavern the night before were politely extinguished with the broad, careful syntheses of this wise man. The establishment had triumphed; once again the sober academic had demonstrated the value of a trained, critical intelligence in contact with the wisdom of the ages. Those burned poems of the night before, now doubtless ashes swept into the tavern's waste bin, were feeble defiance indeed against this man. He sat down and there was much applause.

When Wellek finished speaking, Murray Krieger rose and with careful bows towards the distinguished scholar asked if there were questions. For a long moment there was no response. Then, gaunt and slightly stooped, Donald Justice walked to one of the microphones between the rows of chairs. Justice, with a cigarette cupped in his left hand, trembling just a bit, stood before the microphone and stared up at the distinguished critic who smiled down at him. Almost mumbling, Justice said a few words I could not hear, and then, pulling the microphone close to his mouth, he said very distinctly, "Professor Wellek, what does the critic write *about*?" That was all. And there he stood with the cigarette burning, staring up at the figure on the stage. It was a kind of spontaneous tableau, a living metaphor, the burning cigarette and the whiteness of Wellek's hair.

Wellek talked a bit in answer to Justice's question, but the words were lost to me. People were talking excitedly around me and I could not hear the response. Wellek appeared disturbed by the question and he laughed frequently, something like a musical comedy professor if the setting is Germany. When Wellek stopped talking, Justice seemed to have another question; he leaned towards the microphone, then apparently changed his mind and with a gesture that might have been a shrug of contempt, walked away towards the door, his cigarette still burning in his cupped hand.

Back in Superior, I am again involved with teaching freshmen to write and seniors to read. The Iowa episode was just another academic gathering much like what the next MLA meeting will most probably be—the hung-over recruiter will again seek disenchanted PhD.s for service out west or down south; the critics will dissect Yeats, or somebody. The last time I got a haircut I tried to tell Lamont that diagramming seems to be on the way out. I told him English teachers have been infiltrated by a bunch of thinking poets who seem intent on causing trouble and I am very happy about that fact.

"Do you want the sideburns evened up a little?" he asked.

THE FROST GIANT

James Sunwall



Joey thought of that summer as both a beginning and an end.

The winter snows had melted and run off into ponds and sloughs and puddles. But finally the puddles were gone and his father could plow the garden, cleaving furrows as if behind the prow of a Viking ship steering into black polar seas.

Joey helped plant the seeds. He planted them for the first time because before, when he had been on crutches, they just pretended he helped. And all through the summer the trees bent with the weight of fruit, the corn grew enormous, the grass in the pasture was waist-high, and everything was like Joey himself, almost bursting. When his father came home from the grain elevator, white head-to-foot from working at the feed-mill, he would (if Joey was on the porch) clap his miller's cap firmly on his head and do cartwheels up to the door—or walk on his hands, shaking his feet.

Even mama never said a word against it, for that was his way to get the seeds and grindings out of his pants cuffs. And where he had come the oats and flax and barley would spring up, like the Maniteau walking over the land bringing the crops where his moccasins touched.

Joey's father had told him about the Indians and their stories. He had lived among them. For he had done everything: had fished in the Maelstrom as a boy, had played through Norway and Denmark with a circus, had earned passage to the new country as a seaman, and then had worked his way all over the country. So he had many stories. Joey almost hadn't minded the times he was sick and couldn't sleep at night. Papa would sit beside his bed and tell stories and rub his legs with calloused but gentle hands. Once he had done it all night. And even that summer when Joey was all right again, he would still tell stories after work was done and it was too dark to weed the garden. The two of them often sat together during warm moonlit evenings that summer while mama was serving at Unit suppers, or Eastern Star.

And when she was not around there would be the best tales. Some were about the Little People in the old country who lived underground. Then there were the more frightening stories about angry trolls, or ministers who met black things in the church tower. But, of them all, the most terrifying was about Ymir, the frost giant, who had no face at all. Just a ghastly whiteness with two malevolent yellow eyes staring out, chilling and killing everything when he appeared.

But Joey couldn't think about Ymir or anything terrible that summer. Walking without crutches made the whole world new. He didn't just work in the garden. Every evening he would get the cow, walking behind in the track she made through the thick grasses and the blooming cowslips. One day after the cow was driven in, Joey climbed into the hayloft to explore it. He had not been able to do that when he had to use crutches. As he entered the loft, pigeons swooped down from the cupola and with one rush of wings flew out the door like white smoke. Then Joey saw the swing.

"Say, what's that trapeze doing in the hayloft?" Joey asked later at supper.

Papa smiled. "So you saw the apparatus today did you? I don't suppose it was doing anything, was it?"

"I mean, why's it there?"

"I built it in case someone here would want to use it. Your sister maybe." Papa laughed. "What about it, Gina? Think you can stop studying long enough to use the trapeze?"

"I'm for studying trapazoids not trapezes, papa," Joey's sister smiled.

"Then I guess we'll just have to take it down."

"How about me?" Joey remembered the pigeons, how they had swooped down. He could do that on a trapeze.

"You?" Papa looked at him. "Why — I think you're just the one!" He looked at the others and grinned. "Isn't that something?"

So the next day papa took him to the barn for practice. The ropes were tested and adjusted. Eventually papa pulled himself up on the trapeze, swung faster and faster — at last so high that Joey wanted to shut his eyes. Then he swung to the rafter and hung there by both hands, made a quick twist with his body, and suddenly he was hanging by his knees — then catching the trapeze and again swinging back and forth. At last he let go, did a somersault as he landed, and ended up on his feet, one hand held above his head as if receiving the cheers of a crowd.

Joey rushed up to him. "Were you an acrobat with the circus, papa? Is that what you did?"

He was breathing hard. "No . . . no . . . Joey . . . wasn't good enough for that . . . But a few simple tricks . . . anyone with arm-strength . . . and balance . . . can do."

"Could — can I?" Joey waited, breathless also, for the answer.

"Sure, you'll be a regular acrobat. Don't say too much to your mother about it. But you'll do fine."

And he was right. Within two weeks Joey was working out on the apparatus. "You're a regular monkey," his father would say when Joey had learned something new on the trapeze or the rope. That was papa's favorite compliment. But Joey did not feel like a monkey on the trapeze. He felt more the way a bird must feel, light and free. Not bound by crutches that anchored you to the earth.

Later in the summer the hayloft grew too hot, even though he only wore his underwear like an acrobat. But upon occasion, usually after a cooling rain, the two of them would go up into the loft.

"Look, here's something else you can do after you master the rest." Papa shinnied up the post and pulled himself erect on one of the rafters. "Watch out below," he called. Then he began to walk along the beam, holding his arms out from his sides for balance. "Remember," papa was at the other end and clambering down, "that's for later. When you get more sure on your pins."

Joey nodded slowly. The thought made his stomach feel the way it did when the trapeze swung down. And papa should have known this, Joey thought, half suspecting that he had done it only as an excuse to try it himself.

And still everything continued growing furiously as summer went on. Even the hard times. The Depression. Growing bigger and bigger. "It's the Depression," people would say, as if that were an explanation for anything, or as if Depression was a new word they had learned and were so fond of they could not use it

LOVE LIKE A NEW WORLD

Politicalized, polarized, unexercized,
am I a lover with my paunch
chafed within last year's belt, Babe?
Cradling our lives, the active warehouses
and too many armies bore our friends
who woo with irony. They are skeptical
of prayers that expect an answer; they are
distrustful of oaths from an unbending will,
and of the hard ones who won't watch out
for themselves; and so am I. Around us
sit decades squinting over contracts
of limited liability.

Forgive the bigtime robber barons; praise
the barnstorming biplanes looping the loop
in the age of classic American slang.
The word of their older world powered
passions that transformed the speakers,
who were not quaint.

To tell my love, I must tell of you, Doll,
and us, and how we got this way; but no
credible language holds my frenzy
or explains why I can kill. O neediest
and most needed, were there not lovers once
as excessive as simply armed warriors?
Love has been savage.

Romance, not passion, is a Rightist general
with twenty tanks at daybreak. The capital,
after an hour or two dickering, yields
but is not overrun, as if the parades
were a holiday. Passion is the Revolution.
It starts with a murmuring everywhere; it
spreads, deepens, takes to combat, purifies
itself, bleeds, creates and re-creates,
continues at all costs, and carries, as does
my love for you.

enough. Once Saturday night had been the big night in Royal Elms. But now even though the stores still stayed open the streets were quite empty. The farmers came on Wednesday because the band concert was held then. The concert was free. But all they did was listen to the band and walk up and down the sidewalks. It's the Depression, people told each other.

Something was needed to combat this. That was agreed. Something else free. So the Royal Elms village council decided on the celebration, a gigantic Circus-Carnival with free pony rides, free merry-go-round, free loop-the-loop, free caterpillar ride, free whirl-a-gig. And twice a day the Great Oswald would freely "defy death from the swaying perils of the tightwire."

Gaudy posters showed a man balancing on a thin wire over Niagara Falls. And when Circus-Carnival Saturday arrived, the town was filled not only with farmers but with people from the surrounding towns. All day the ponies trotted around in the circular ring erected on Main street. And all day the riders whirled

TO DRIVE HER OUT OF MIND

Hoping his five gray hairs were premature but fretting that they weren't, he smoked a packet of stale cigars while he sweated through an overcast noon all his own. Of his leathery wits and notable education, a few parties had come with conversation and girls. Not much good greened in his outlook, the tumble-down roof line of haphazard ambitions; too much disorder smoked from a year's wastage with a stunted love affair.

To have driven her out of mind, he'd have paid a bride price or gone on the ancient tours to fame over monsters' dead bodies. Over whose dead body will he stand as his younger self again?

They say that when the double-jawed trap cracks on the wolf, he will moan and tug until settling to his escape: the long snout panting at the wound, the teeth hesitant, and then the hours of his bloody solitude. Is his the free spirit, finding its way back to the fast world with a three-legged trot? One questions the fierce bravado, and wonders if another wolf mightn't wait by his paw a mean week for starvation. Grizzled old barker, when will you be footloose and fancy-free again?

Al Lee

about on the mechanical thrill rides, each person clutching a Merchant's Complimentary Ticket. But the biggest attraction was the Great Oswald who was putting up a line stretching from the roof of the bank building to the bell tower of the Lutheran church. The aerialist did the work himself, but he was not a man to disregard his audience.

"Think that's tight enough, you people down there?" he would say; or, "How about *that*, think it'll hold?" After the wire was finally up, the Great Oswald walked out a few feet and balanced on it, bending his knees and causing it to sway back and forth until the crowd burst out in applause.

He stepped back to the bank roof and held up his hand for silence. "Save that for the show, folks. You ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Then he went inside the Royal Elms Billiard Palace to wait for the afternoon showtime. Joey was not allowed to go inside but could see the men grouped around the Great Oswald, treating him to beers. And

Joey imagined that some day he too would be an aerialist, perhaps swinging his trapeze under the Big Top, so high that to the people watching below he would be a tiny speck against the canvas. But even as he pressed his nose flat against the plateglass window the whistle blew. It was the Corn Belt Special coming into the station with the afternoon papers. And Joey knew he had to go down to the depot and sort out the newspapers for the carriers. On the way he met his father coming out of the grain elevator.

"Has that guy walked the wire yet, son?"

"No. He's still in the Billiard Palace, papa. I wish I could see him do it."

"You have your job, Joey. Work comes first. Besides, you can see it tonight."

"But I'll miss it now."

"You won't miss much," he said. "There's not a lot to it."

"Could you do it, papa?" Joey called after him. "Papa?"

By the time the papers were sorted, the act was over. The Great Oswald had walked the entire distance with nothing between him and the ground but a wire and fifty feet of air. There was no net at all, as he had pointed out countless times that afternoon.

"You shoulda seen him," Ollie Olson said. Ollie had been late for his papers because he had waited to see the whole performance. "Look, he went across once and then he came back. Only, when he was on the way back he stopped and bounced the wire so it swung back and forth, sideways, like this." Ollie teetered from one side to the other on the curb, his arms outstretched as he balanced.

Joey, Ollie, and the other boys peered through the window of the Palace at the Great Oswald and the crowd gathered around him. Some were still shaking his hand, and those who hadn't already bought him a beer wanted to have their chance to treat him.

Joey's father came out the door.

"Where you going, papa?"

"Home. Come on."

"I want to look —"

"Joel!" That was all he said. But there was something more. Something which made papa very angry.

It didn't come out till supper was almost over and the telephone rang.

"Probably Mr. Wick." Papa crumpled his napkin and put it beside his plate. "Probably about that carload of bran."

When papa came back from answering the phone he sat down and finished eating his dessert. Then he looked up and said, "Well, I stuck my neck out."

"How?" Gina wanted to know.

"Well, this Great Something-or-other —"

"The Great Oswald?"

"Yah. That's him. The tightwire walker." Papa nodded his head. "He had about five beers after he done his act this afternoon. And I told the boys in the poolhall that if they didn't quit feeding him beers they'd have a tight wirewalker."

Gina and mama laughed.

"Yah." Papa didn't smile. "Well, some farmer who was drunk already said maybe I thought I could walk that tightwire over to the church. And I said maybe I did think so." Papa shrugged his shoulders. So I asked for it all right. The tightrope guy heard that, and he had enough beer to get nasty. The whole crowd was with him. I left."

"Bad enough to hook such a wire on the church. But to have a drunken man walk it . . ." Mama choked at the thought.

"Well, he won't walk it. He's too drunk to walk the floor of the poolhall now."

Mama gave a sigh of triumph.

"So they called up. The crowd won't stay if they cancel the evening performance. And I'd said I could do it."

Mama, Gina and Joey stared at him.

"I told them I'd do it."

"Well, if I was you I'd just tell them that —" mama began.

"But you are not me."

There was nothing more to say. They knew him. He had given his word.

That evening Joey stood below and watched his father climb past the clock to the roof of the Citizen's Bank. He did not pause to survey the crowd dramatically, the way they said the other wirewalker had, but stepped quickly and surely onto the slightly swaying highwire. The electric light bulbs strung on both sides made him appear very naked and alone. To Joey he looked unreal, and as white as when he came home powdered from the feed mill; only now it was because of the lights on the white trunks and the bare legs and feet, light shimmering from the spangled cape (the only part of the aerialist's costume that had fit him).

Joey could do nothing but watch, too full of foreboding to think. But many times afterward he imagined how it must have felt to be up there, to watch the pale upturned faces which were family, townsmen, and strangers. To be up in the night, lighted by the bright incandescent bulbs stretching from Bank to Church like the thin path which leads to heaven.

Even the cymbal-clashing merry-go-round music had stilled for the moment, the music which had played all morning and all afternoon and all the night up to this very time. Up in the night air with only the cicadas' shrilling audible, above the hush of the crowd which had come from farm and store and village home to see this, above them all papa walked.

He carried a pole for balance, as the other, the professional had done. And up there as he walked he must have felt the vibration, the tips of the pole quivering gently with every step he took towards the Church. He had a view of the village of Royal Elms, Joey afterward thought, a view which no one else ever could have, looking down from that height at all of them spread out below, framed by the dark and souging elms, the people looking up at him now, white blobs in the nimbus-glow of the streetlights; not individuals lined along that string of lights above them, clustered



around the glow, but nameless insects which cannot fly, forever earthbound, sharing with the moth only the fatal tropism towards light; the closely packed mass of bodies drawn towards the illuminated pathway in the sky yet leaving a space below the wire, a thin gash like an incision drawn from Bank to Church across the upturned faces. The man up there (and this to Joey long afterwards) was expected to do more than walk the strand of wire, almost as if the one who left the path of growing seeds where he trod must do more. He was doing this for them. And not just so the crowd wouldn't leave before offering their payment in trade; this ritual was as necessary as sowing the seed in the spring. This too was an act of the season. The faces looking up, bodies pressed together at the ceremony, were not looking at a hired performer but a part of themselves, of their village.

The stores were closed now, the business done for the evening. This was the moment for which the farmers and even the strangers had come. Royal Elms could not buy this as it had the afternoon performance; this they were offering in exchange for their day of trade. And suddenly Joey felt he should cry out; for the crowd had been held. The man up there had done it. Go back, he thought, Go Back Papa. Now Save Yourself.

Yet he kept inching as steadily along that almost invisible wire as when he walked the rafter in the barn. Only a fall could stop him from reaching the far end of the thin swaying line. For he would not default. That was why the crowd had stayed. Not that they knew him. Few did. But it was his blood. He was old Norway. And he would stand by his word. That was all the town had, for the depression had taken everything else. The crowd had remained because they had been offered the town's honor in its promise. That was why papa had agreed to do this; not because of his boast (though there was that); not through vanity (though there was that also), but because Royal Elm's word was his word too. In the years after, Joey never felt that same pride again. Only in books, later, were

there echoes of glory. This was real. He could feel it. And then—

"Ahhh . . ." a terrible scream like the voices of the lost which shriek high in the air. Joey saw him for an instant and forever: the white figure there with the wire nowhere beneath his feet. That was all. Afterwards he believed he must have seen the wire falling loose, the plummeting fall, the cape fluttering above papa's shoulders, the pole still clutched in his hand as he tumbled downwards. This Joey must have seen. But all he could remember was the moment when papa appeared to hover in space, and then the sight of the body hitting the car parked below and the sickening ripping and splintering sound as he plunged through the flimsy top of a Model T. Everyone watched, transfixed, as the cap, the white miller's cap, slowly floated after him like a leaf fluttering down. From the hole in the top of the car the two ends of the balancing pole stuck up like the shattered masts of a ship.

Then the crowd, the people. A convulsive swirling mass pressed about the Ford. Women shrieked. Men shouted. Joey was knocked down. He got to his feet to be knocked down again and a foot stamped his hand before he could crawl away and rise again. His eyes were blinded with tears of horror and pain, and still the crowd pushed until the car in the center rocked with the pressure, the ends of the pole vibrating like the antennae of some stricken bug swarmed upon by ants.

"Stand back! Stand back!" Men yelled from the edge of the crowd, still pushing forward themselves.

"Where's the doctor? Get a doctor!" But even as the cry went up, the doctor walked across the street. He must have been watching from his office upstairs, Joey thought. The crowd parted before Doctor Peterson as if that space beneath the wire had suddenly burst open again like a wound. And while the doctor did not seem hurried he had his bag and as he walked he was starting to open it. Then the crowd closed behind him and Joey saw no more.

"Come, boy. Come with me." Aunt Julia was by his side, tugging at his arm. "There's nothing you can do now."

Later, his aunt's telephone rang. "He's here," Aunt Julia said. "Got knocked down by that crowd but he's all right . . . Yes . . . Yes." There was a long pause. "Don't worry, Bertha. I'll see about it. Don't worry about that."

She hung up.

"Is—is papa dead?" Joey asked.

"Of course not. Your mama said the top of the car broke his fall. He's in St. Olaf's hospital." She hesitated. "You're to stay here with me." She patted his head. "No. He ain't dead and ain't going to be."

"Honest, Aunt Julia? He's going to be as well as ever?"

Something flickered across her face, so quickly he could hardly be sure. "Well, I know this, Joey—he's not going to die. Get down on your knees tonight and thank God for that."

The next morning while he was eating breakfast, Uncle Hans came in and announced that Joey's mother

was back home. "She's already milked the cow and gathered eggs," he said. "She wants you to come home and eat breakfast, Joey."

"I already ate," Joey said, slipping the toast under the table to old King, Uncle Hans' dog, feeling the wet gentle mouth on his fingertips.

"She wants you to come home anyway," Uncle Hans said. "I never seen the beat of that woman. She's taking it wonderful."

"What?" Joey wanted to know.

"Go see your mama now," Aunt Julia said. "Scoot!"

He did scoot out the door and across the lawn to his house. And as he felt the springiness of the grass under his feet, the joy he had all summer came back to him. He remembered papa coming from work, running and cartwheeling toward him. Joey opened the screen door, hesitated, and then let it close hissing behind him. And as he hesitated the thought had come, "Papa will never do that again, ever."

Mama was at the stove. His sister was sitting at the table.

"I'm frying your eggs, Joey. Sit down there by Gina."

Joey sat down and took a sip of milk. "Is Papa upstairs?"

"No," Gina answered. "He's still in the hospital."

"I already ate at Aunt Julia's," Joey said as mama approached with the eggs. "Is he going to stay in the hospital long?"

"Can't waste food in times like these," mama put two eggs on his plate. Thank God you have something to eat."

"Yes. He's going to be in the hospital a long time, Joey," Gina said. And he noticed she was puffed and red around the eyes.

"Couldn't he come home and stay in bed?"

Mama sat down. "No," she said. "Doctor Peterson wanted him in the hospital." She frowned. "Nobody would take him in their car so we had to pay five dollars for the hearse to get him there."

Joey stared at her. Papa in the hearse.

"I should think somebody would have taken him. He wasn't hardly bleeding at all—just a little at the mouth and ears. People so particular about their cars!"

"Oh, mama!" Gina put her hands to her face. "He *had* to go in the ambulance. He was all broken."

"They asked if he wants a private room!" Mama said. "Did they take us for millionaires?"

Gina left the table. Sobs shook her thin shoulders.

"What happened has happened," mama said to her. "Crying don't help."

"What will happen to papa?" Joey wailed.

"Don't you start that too." Mama got up and went over to the stove. "There's enough to worry about without that."

Joey sat numbly staring across the table. He heard Gina sobbing upstairs, the sound carrying through the hot air register in the ceiling.

"Eat your eggs, Joey."

He looked down. Two malevolent yellow eyes were glaring up at him from the whiteness of the plate.

The Pocahontas Part

Alyce Ingram

Agatha and Mumsie wore their good coats today, lovely, soft wool with ample bat-wing sleeves (Agatha's coat green and Mumsie's blue but otherwise alike), delightful round pussy-soft fur collars and matching tiny round pussy-soft pillbox hats. (Agatha's Husband did not attend church with them. He probably attended another church. Or perhaps he was an unbeliever.) Mar-ga-re-tha (they pronounced it like that, in four distinct syllables) wore her new red velvet coat with white rabbit's fur collar and matching white rabbit headband. Agatha had taken her temperature and found it normal.

No, they told Husband. He need not drop them off. It was a heavenly day. And only five blocks. They set off with Mar-ga-re-tha between them, holding tightly to her fat little white gloved hands. And when they got to church they opened her coat at the collar and removed her gloves and put them in Agatha's purse and kissed her and told her to be a good girl and sent her down the stairs to join the happy voices below.

And Mumsie, in their pew, squeezed her hand comfortingly when Agatha said, "I miss her already." And they helped one another take off their coats, draping the collars over the back of the seat (their fingers touching) and for an instant it seemed as though they, the two of them, were the only ones in church.

And while the faces of men remained expressionless, elderly women sitting behind looked as though they wished Agatha were their daughter. While young adults, it was perfectly evident, thought, looking wistfully at Mumsie, *If only she were my mother. Or grandmother.*

Then someone behind them coughed and Mumsie, followed by Agatha, looked back which brought about a flurry of digging desperately in one's purse for cough drops and Mumsie and Agatha pursed their lips disapprovingly, indicating that even a child would know better than to cough in Mr. Galen's Church.

And after the Prelude and the Call to Worship and Hymn #9 and Responsive Reading #75 and the Anthem and the Response, Mr. Galen began to speak. And Agatha's and Mumsie's shoulders touched in perfect harmony with Mr. Galen's words.

Then at mid-sermon when Agatha's shoulders in white nylon blouse and Mumsie's in black had just begun to chill, an usher walked up the center aisle to their pew which was third row from the front, center, bringing Mar-ga-re-tha. And they very quickly helped one another on with their coats and put Mar-ga-re-tha between them, enveloping her in the ample sleeves, and Agatha removed her pussy-soft pillbox hat and gave it to her to play with. And Mumsie (*Grandmumsie*, now) whispered, almost inaudibly, What was the matter. And Agatha, too, inquired, What was the matter. And

Mar-ga-re-tha replied, snuffling, that she had no hankie. And Mumsie (*Grandmumsie*) and Agatha rummaged frantically in their purses for an unused hankie and Agatha found none but *Grandmumsie* found a white Irish linen with tatting and gave it to Mar-ga-re-tha and helped her to blow and in almost no time at all Mr. Galen had finished with his sermon and they were shaking his hand at the door and telling him how much they had enjoyed his sermon.

They walked home gaily, Mar-ga-re-tha sharing her white gloved hands impartially, and found that Husband had basted the roasting hen properly and put the potatoes on to boil and soon Mumsie was stomping potatoes furiously with a wooden mallet, a white lace-edged apron tied around her middle, while Agatha stirred sputtering yellowish gravy which Mumsie examined for lumps.

And they called Husband (who spent a great deal of time in the basement sorting screws and putting them into jars of graduated sizes) for dinner. And Mar-ga-re-tha said the blessing and recited her Sunday School lesson. And Mumsie told about the woman who coughed so much in church they couldn't hear all of dear Mr. Galen's sermon.

Husband said, "Say, that *is* a shame. Now if the three most beautiful girls in the world will excuse me, I've got to run down to the office for a couple of hours." Mumsie and Agatha and Mar-ga-re-tha said, "What a shame to lose our nice Daddy again." And he squeezed Mumsie's shoulders and kissed the top of Agatha's head and Mar-ga-re-tha's too, and he backed out of the driveway and tooted until he had reached the corner as the three of them waved from the front bay window. (Poor Daddy had to work almost every Sunday afternoon but you never heard him complain.)

After supper (Daddy had telephoned to say he couldn't make it but would be there, later, to take Mumsie home) as Mumsie and Agatha, on opposite sides of the youth bed drew the Bunny-Boo spread up and tucked it about Mar-ga-re-tha's shoulders, Agatha inquired,

"And who gets the Pocahontas part?"

Mar-ga-re-tha said, "Eloise." And she started to pick at her spread.

Grandmumsie held her hands firmly (but gently) and said, "We mustn't do that, darling. Look. We've already picked half the chenille off Bunny-Boo's pink tail. Soon there won't be any tail left. And whoever saw a bunny without a tail."

Mar-ga-re-tha stopped picking at her bunny.

Agatha picked at a hangnail. "And what part did you get?" she asked ever so casually. Mumsie clasped her hands and held her breath.

"A pilgrim," Mar-ga-re-tha said and she could hardly be heard with her head under the covers. Her prayers, too, were muffled.

Husband found Mumsie and Agatha sitting in total darkness when he came to pick up Mumsie. (He had said, often enough, Mumsie was welcome to move in any time she liked but Mumsie had steadfastly refused. 'No house is big enough for two families,' was the way she felt.)

Now Mumsie said, "You *will* call me in the morning?" (Mumsie and Agatha talked three or four times a day on the telephone.)

Agatha put her call through first next morning. She hadn't slept.

"Mumsie. Is that you? Yes — it's me. She spit up again last night. Yes — all over. In bed. All over Bunny-Boo. I'll have to wash it again. But I just don't know — the sky's clear — but there's hardly any wind. And after I covered her with *our* spread — that was at two — if she didn't sneak down —."

Mumsie breathed disapproval at Agatha's choice of word.

Agatha corrected herself quickly.

"... slipped downstairs and went through the hamper and found Bunny-Boo all by herself and dragged it back upstairs — what if she had fallen down the stairs with only that twenty-five watt — and was in the process of spreading it on the bed. Yes, all the mess — I had only sponged it with cold water. Well, I had to literally *wrench* —." (Mumsie, at her end of the connection, recoiled.) "... so do you suppose we might —?"

Mumsie said she would see about the wind and telephone back. (They had long ago discarded the very notion of taking anything, even emergencies like Mar-ga-re-tha's spit-ups, to the laundromat. You never knew, you just didn't know what might have been whirling about in that gigantic metal cylinder just ahead of you. To put precious pink and white Bunny-Boo in — it gave one the gags to even contemplate.)

It took Mumsie only three minutes to examine the wind and the barometer over the sink and she called back. "... would you like me to come and help out, dear? It promises to be windy by noon. I could bring my things — and we just might change sheets and do up yesterday's damask. Where Husband spilled his gravy."

Agatha's relief could almost be heard. It was that genuine. "Oh, would you. Then we could have lunch together. Some of that nice chicken gravy left-over. Are you up to it, Mumsie?"

(Mumsie came over almost every Monday and helped Agatha wash, bringing a pillow slip with her own little things. Unless it rained. Then Agatha went to Mumsie's and they cleaned the oven and scrubbed the linoleum and washed woodwork and windows and window-wells and the smell of bleach and borax and soapy steel pads was overpowering. Whichever, at Agatha's or Mumsie's, they had yesterday's left-over chicken gravy on Mumsie's baking-powder biscuits and green tea for lunch.)

Mumsie arrived, only a little out of breath, with her stuffed pillow slip and two cookie sheets. "This afternoon," she said, "I thought we would bake her sour cream raisin cookies. With frosting."

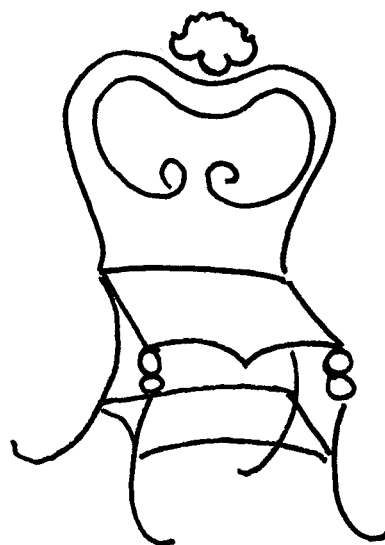
Agatha (her eyes were red and puffy) put Bunny-Boo in the hot, sudsy water first. (You wouldn't dream of putting in anything else first. Not even Husband's white shirts.)

She had been unusually silent.

"I think it would be wise," Mumsie said as she clocked the first load, "to pay a visit to her teacher this afternoon. When we pick her up."

"I wouldn't care so much if she'd ever got to be May Queen," Agatha said. "Or even Priscilla. But she's always just pilgrim. Or an angel. And it's just not fair."

"The angel parts I can understand," Mumsie said. "With her big blue eyes and golden hair. Yes, that I can understand."



"But she shouldn't be discriminated against just *because* she has fair hair," Agatha said wiping her eyes. "One hates to be an angel or pilgrim all the time."

Mumsie pocketed the button that popped off Bunny-Boo as they put him through the wringer. "You don't suppose — do you suppose it's the fact that she wears glasses? I mean, so many children are made to feel different because of that —."

"I couldn't sleep all night," Agatha said. "Husband said at 3:30 he was certain they meant nothing personal. It was just that she's too fat for the part of an Indian girl. But I still think it's her yellow curls. And braces on her teeth. It's just not fair."

They hung Bunny-Boo carefully on the freshly washed clothesline and ran their fingers expertly along the selvage, then returned to the basement and put Husband's white shirts in the machine.

"Eloise," Mumsie said. "Isn't she the one who got the Mary part in church three years ago? At Christmastime?"

"That's her," Agatha said. "And first angel last year. While Mar-ga-re-tha was only third." She sorted the socks and turned them.

"I think we'll have a lit-tle talk with Teacher," Mumsie said. "Now cheer up. You'll make yourself sick again."

Agatha, however, would not be cheered and could eat only two of Mumsie's flaky biscuits at lunch. Even when Mumsie told her, taking fresh Bunny-Boo off the line dry and fluffy, to just smell. There was nothing quite like the smell of clothes dried out of doors, Agatha remained wan.

At three o'clock, after they'd baked Mar-ga-re-tha's sour cream cookies and sewed on Bunny-Boo's eye, they put on their everyday hats and everyday coats (Mumsie's black and white plaid and Agatha's brown and white with ample bat-wing enveloping sleeves) and set out.

Mumsie said, "We'd best take the umbrella. We wouldn't want to take a chance with her."

A brisk wind had arisen and they bent their heads to it and linked arms and walked close and when Mumsie's hat blew off they ran after it as one, hardly separating.

"I can't imagine why she hates school so much," Agatha said, puffing. "I have to fight to get her out of bed every morning."

"You were just like that," Mumsie said. "Only you wet."

At school, Mumsie went into the principal's office and Agatha waited in the hall to envelop Mar-ga-re-tha in her huge sleeves as the other children milled about noisily.

Mumsie emerged, twenty minutes later, triumphant, a little breathless, her hat askew. She carried a slip of paper with the words of the Pocahontas part.

They walked home slowly, Mar-ga-re-tha safe between them. Mumsie carried the old black umbrella and it looked ever so much like a huge bat with spread wings protecting the three of them from the drizzle.

Agatha telephoned Mumsie early the following morning to say she'd had to keep Mar-ga-re-tha home.

"She's running a temp. She rolled and tossed all night long, the way she does only worse. Her bedclothes were all a-tangle and she'd plucked out the rest of Bunny-Boo's tail."

Mumsie said she would be right over. "We'll practice the Pocahontas part," she said. "It will keep her entertained while she's in bed. Say — why don't we — I know. I'll be Captain John Smith and you can be an Indian. I'll bring those feathers and we'll make a bow and arrow —" Mumsie squealed in sheer joy.

Agatha said, "Oh, you'd make a wonderful Captain, Mumsie. Now be sure to bring her part."

"But you have it, darling," Mumsie said. "I distinctly remember —"

"Well, I thought so, too," Agatha said worriedly, "but I've gone through my purse — coin purse and all. And my pockets —"

"No matter, darling," Mumsie said. "Don't give it a thought. I'll drop by school for another copy on my way over."

And she hurried to the attic to find her feathers.

INSTANT POETRY

Tony Swain

The *Publisher's Weekly* recently announced that a California firm has produced something called "Miracle Plot Cards." These cards contain the basic formulas of every conceivable story plot. All you have to do is lay the cards on the table according to a pattern of instructions and you have a plot for an "amazingly original" novel which you then write and sell.

Working along similar lines, I've devised a way to write in a more elevated genre—poetry. My plan also has the advantage of not involving an outlay of cash. By using items to be found around the house, in forty-five minutes you can become a masterful avant-garde poet. Notice here I say *avant-garde*. You are not going to be a mere versifier, a maker of sing-song, rhythmic doggerel. You are going to slash souls and grind salt into universal wounds.

To turn out an "amazingly original" piece of poetry, you will need to arrange the following equipment upon a table. The kitchen table will do.

1. 100 3"x5" pieces of paper
2. 1 9½"x11" sheet of paper
3. A pencil, pen or typewriter
4. A six-hole muffin tin with the holes labeled n. (noun), v. (verb), adj. (adjective), prep. (preposition), adv. (adverb), and misc. (miscellaneous)
5. A large bowl
6. A thesaurus

Now that you have your equipment ready, you must decide upon a topic. This is not as difficult as it sounds because avant-garde poetry has only four acceptable subjects: birth, life, death, and sex. You are allowed to combine these topics in any way you please, but you must present only the grim aspects of them. Let us say, for example, that you choose to write on death — with a little sex thrown in.

Open your thesaurus to the section on death. (You will find related topics such as killing, corpse, and interment conveniently located in adjacent sections.) Now, using the 3x5 slips of paper, write down a vivid assortment of words and phrases, placing each in the appropriate hole in the muffin tin. (The thesaurus indicates what part of speech the words are so that will cause no difficulty.)

In general, I recommend using only lower case letters even when writing proper nouns. It is effective, though, to occasionally write a word *all* in CAPITALS. Let inspiration of the moment determine this.

Don't forget to get your smattering of words from the sex section and throw in a few popular phallic symbols for good measure.

You will notice, when you finish this step, that there are two empty holes in the muffin tin: the one marked prep. and the one marked misc.



For the prep. hole, just think of about eight prepositions such as in, among, under, etc., write each, followed by an article, on one of the 3x5 slips, and drop into the muffin tin.

The misc. hole you will find more of a challenge. Into this you must place 3x5 slips upon which are written an assortment of punctuation marks, foreign phrases (preferably in some obscure language which uses an alphabet other than ours. Sanskrit is nice, but Greek will do for a beginner.), onomatopoeic words (pow, smack, squeeee, etc.), and blasphemies and obscenities. Out of consideration for the post office department, in the example which we will create here, we will use the word "obscenity" and the word "blasphemy" instead of a real obscenity or blasphemy. Take into consideration that this weakens the total effect and that your own poetry will be much the better with the real thing.

Now that the muffin tin is filled, take twelve more of the 3x5 slips, number them from 0 to 11, fold them, and drop them into the large bowl.

These preparations should have taken less than half an hour. The actual writing of the poem, which comes next, should take less than fifteen minutes. In fact I don't recommend that you take any longer than that or you will lose the spontaneity which is one of the most important characteristics of avant-garde poetry.

Decide upon the width of your margins. Make them rather wide so your words can be frequently broken at odd places. Then begin your poem by drawing a word or phrase from the muffin tin and writing it in the upper left-hand corner of your paper, next to the left-hand margin. I would recommend drawing a few from the misc. hole first, but, of course, the ultimate choice rests with the individual poet.

After each word, phrase, or misc., draw a number from the bowl. This will indicate how many spaces you should skip before going on to the next word, phrase, or misc. (Replace each number drawn to be used again.)

Continue drawing words and spaces, keeping in the back of your mind some fuzzy rules of syntax to help you decide what muffin tin hole you should draw from — but *please* do not be too rigid about this or your poem will become staid, static, and confined and lose much of its thought-provoking obscurity.

For variety in the visual experience, you might write a word or two vertically instead of horizontally. And do not forget to liberally pepper your poem with words from the misc. hole — these are what will give your work its vitality.

I suggest that you leave your poem untitled. This will make it possible for the reader to relate it to his own personal aspirations and frustrations and disasters, hence the writing will be more meaningful. You might, however, place a high denomination Roman Numeral at the head of your poem. This lends dignity and implies that you are an experienced poet with a good number of works to your credit.

Now, here is the poem written in exactly the manner described.

LXIII

"OBSCENITY	of the jug
ultaedazoic	necropolis
	i ass
assinate	beside sangui
nolent STYX	memento mor
i , ! lynch	eiffel tow
ers	interred in the bone
box(	Ψ T ΓΩΞΞ
	s
	t
	i
	f
	f
extinct&	gang
renous	BLASPHEMY
	splats within
	the holland tunnel
BANG)	
?	e
	l
	g
	a
	i
	c
matricide	;

There you have it. I think you will agree that you have never read a poem richer in evocation, more stunning in impact. But now it's your turn. Dig in. You'll soon be dashing off dozens just as good. Then you will begin to realize the truth of the statement by the German Expressionist writer Hans Henry Jahnn, "Only those who create . . . can overcome the senselessness of existence."

A Countryman's Hand A Countryman's Hand A Countryman's Hand A Countryman's Hand



William Sayres

He had worked with Miss Brokowski for many years, and he no longer looked closely at her. He could not have said what she did after office hours or on weekends. His chief impression of her was that she did her work well and smelled vaguely like incense. When she had asked to see him alone in his office he had been as startled as if the mailman had asked to move in with him. Now, incredibly, there she was, standing before his desk, saying strange things to him.

"I don't understand," he said, trying to focus on her. Was that some kind of powder in her hair? "What's wrong?"

"Time," she said, almost to herself. She looked at him bleakly. "I mean . . ." She nodded, as if she had already finished the sentence in her own mind and that would do quite well.

"Are you ill?" he asked.

"No. Just old." She smiled absently. "So you see . . ."

"I *don't* see," he said. "You're not old." He looked at his hands. "You're not as old as I am, and I'm not old."

She smiled again. "It's different for you, Mr. Wandeska. Your work is . . . what you are."

He turned his hands over, noticing the heavy veins. "It's not *all* I am," he said defensively.

She shrugged. "It's all I see of you." She leaned against the desk; it was a hot day, and she was usually sitting down at her work at this time. "There shouldn't be arguments," she said impulsively. "We're fellow countrymen, after all."

"How is that?" he asked, confused.

"We're both Polish, of course."

"We're both Americans."

"Yes, certainly. But we're Polish too." She said it as if that were what had defined him all these years: a fellow passenger on a ship that had sailed long ago.

"What will you do?" he asked.

"Read. Walk. Rest. Many things." She laughed. "Maybe I'll even go back to school."

"At your age?"

"Didn't you say I wasn't old?"

He laughed with her. "All the same, it would be difficult."

"If it's too difficult," she said simply, "I'd stop. I can indulge myself that way now." She touched the desk, as if she were touching part of him. "Just as I take liberties in talking to you now." Her face became grave, and her skin seemed to take on the shadows of her thoughts. "It's my last day, you see, and . . ." She nodded: another sentence finished in silence.

"I don't mind the liberties," he said gently. "You've been a good worker," he added, as if that excused everything. "Is there anything I can do?"

She looked at him uncertainly. "The last day," she said: the ship was at last docking, once and for all. "Yes. There's something you can do, sir."

"Name it," he said hesitantly. He was afraid it would be too much or too little.

"It's my furniture, my things. I'm moving into a smaller room, you see, and I thought you could put me in touch with someone who could help me move my things." She paused. "It's in the same building, and there isn't really much to move," she went on, as if she owed it to the world not to trouble it very much.

Too little, he thought. "I'll do more than that," he said, suddenly angry — partly, he reflected, because he had been asked to do anything, and partly because he had not been asked to do more. If his routine was going to be upset, it should not be for a trifle. "I'll help you myself."

"Oh," she said anxiously, "you mustn't. Some of it's quite heavy, you see, and . . ."

"And you think I'm too old and weak?" He felt like shaking his fist at her. "Is that what you think of me?"

"Oh no, sir. But I think you ought to be careful what you do." She looked at him with a tenderness that he found baffling. "It's so good of you even to offer . . . my, just to imagine that you would . . ." She was lost again.

He had an uneasy sensation that the office was filling up with incense and cobwebs. He stood up and pounded the desk. "I said I'd *help!*" he said, as if he'd club her with his help if he had to.

She nodded, smiling at secrets she was retelling to herself. He felt immersed in the smell of incense and the feel of cobwebs. "Yes," she said finally, "it's very good of you . . ."

They said little to each other during the drive from the office to the apartment building. She gave him directions, and every so often said, "My, what a beautiful car" — touching it here and there, as she had touched his desk: this was the only dependable way to know things.

He parked in a small lot next to the apartment building. It was an old brick structure with a primitive elevator. Miss Brokowski lived on the third floor, and was moving to the fifth. "It's cheaper higher up," she told him in the elevator, "but the view's really better." In the hall outside the third-floor room she added, as if she did not want him to think she was trying to mislead him, "Of course, I'm moving to save money."

The room was large, and had evidently once been part of a suite which had been partitioned. The bed was in a corner, separated from the rest of the room by what appeared to have been a pantry wall. In another corner was a washstand, with a small table next to it. An electric hotplate, a coffee pot and a coffee cannister were on the table. Above the table was a wall shelf which held a box of powdered milk, a sugar bowl, three cups, paper napkins, and a mason jar filled with graham crackers. There was a moss-colored sofa in the center of the room; backing it was a highly polished oak table on which a Bible and stacks of mystery magazines were neatly arranged. At each end of the sofa was a wooden chair, and two other wooden chairs stood against the wall opposite the door, flanking the large window. The wallpaper was pink with a floral design, and puffed out here and there. On the walls were dozens of framed pictures: family portraits, nature scenes, and movie stars popular in the 1930's. The only picture with a wall to itself was an inscribed photograph of Erle Stanley Gardner.

She looked around the room apologetically. "So many things to lift," she said. "Couldn't you wait?"

"Waiting won't make me any stronger, I'm afraid." He took off his suitcoat and draped it over a chair. "I'll need help with the sofa and big table, though."

"The table doesn't go," she said regretfully. "It isn't mine. It's my best piece, and it isn't mine."

He rolled up his sleeves. "Maybe the janitor can help me with the sofa."

"What about the bed?"

"Oh, I can take that apart."

She looked nervously at his bare arms, as if he were preparing to take *her* apart. "Do you have to move things right away? Won't you have some coffee first?"

The truth is, he thought, I'm afraid to settle here; already the smell of incense and the feel of cobwebs

seemed to be trying to hold him: they did not like motion. He shook his head: what curious ideas! Still . . . "I'd better start," he said.

She looked around the room. "They've been here so long. I have the strangest notion they can't be moved."

He tugged tentatively at an arm of the sofa. It was clearly too heavy for him. "I'll leave that for last."

She held up a hand, as if he had been interrupting something. After a few moments she said slowly, "The truth is, I've wanted to move for some time now."

"Why haven't you?"

"You'll think I'm very odd, I'm afraid, but . . ."

She paused. "I can almost hear my things telling me to stay." She licked her lips. "I suppose living alone . . ." She smiled. "But you're helping me, aren't you? I'll move now, won't I?"

"There's nothing stopping you."

"No . . . nothing." She looked out the window, which showed only a bare courtyard. "Sometimes I think . . . coming from another country . . . I'm afraid to move again."

"It's only a change of rooms." He lifted one of the chairs and put it down again. It was heavier than he had thought.

A QUESTION

The night express moves around the perimeter of the bay like illuminating words advancing around a marquee.

In the background a city, certainly no more real than a backdrop in a theatre, rejoices that its lights are in the shape of a heart.

You have asked me a question to which I have no answer.

And thus, at midnight, as the city extinguishes its lights one after another, you lift your body slowly and painfully from the bay like a slender column of water.

But it is too late for me to cleanse myself. This hill on which I am standing anticipates dawn. It has already begun to applaud although the play is not half-finished.

Philip Hammial

"That's right . . . only a change of rooms." She turned from the window. "Have you ever wanted to go back . . . to visit?"

"No," he said emphatically. "I don't visit cemeteries."

"I taught school there," she said, as if she had not heard him. "I remember the sun, coming in the windows." She turned to the window again. "And the children, playing in the yard . . . so much sun . . . so many children." She stared at the courtyard. "And then it all changed . . . so horrible . . . so horrible for my children." She touched the pane, as if she would

reach into the courtyard for her children. "When my things . . . tell me to stay . . . it's like the voices of my children, telling me to stay . . . to keep it the way it was." She shook her head and tried to smile. "I suppose I sound like a crazy woman."

"I wouldn't say that," he said gently. "But you remember too much."

"Yes," she said, watching the shadows grow across the courtyard. "It is better to move."

"Look," he said briskly, feeling that he had to get out of the room, to escape from the incense for awhile. "Where do your things go? I'd better check on it before I take anything out."

"Five twenty-three," she said. "To the left of the elevator."

"Do you have a key? Or is it unlocked?"

"Just ring the bell," she said absently. "There are people living there." She continued to look into the courtyard.

A chill came to him as softly as a caress, as if she had touched him with fingers of ice. "I don't understand. How can people be living there?"

"Oh, they'll move," she said calmly. "They'll move when I move. They're all ready."

"Where will they move?"

"Here. It's all arranged."

"You're sure?"

"Oh yes. It's been arranged for some time now."

He left her standing by the window, watching the courtyard shadows. He could not seem to get the elevator to work, so he walked up two flights. He looked for a doorbell on 523, but did not find one. He knocked.

A small hairless man in a blue bathrobe opened the door. "Well?" His voice and eyes were hostile. "We're watching television."

"My name's Wandeska, Joe Wandeska. I'm helping Miss Brokowski move."

"You are, hey?" The door wavered.

"She said you'd know about it."

"She did, did she?" The door swung back and forth tentatively. "Well, you'd better come in. The program's almost finished."

As Joe sat in a lame rocker, listening to the turbulent sounds of a Western at climax, seeing the bathrobed man bent close to the screen, waiting to ask about a move that now seemed lost in traces of incense and cobwebs, he felt as if he had wandered into a dream that did not belong to him. The wife (he assumed) of the bathrobed man shuttled about the room in a green wrapper, tidying, nibbling, chuckling. During a commercial the bathrobed man told her crossly to sit down. "I can follow it just fine this way," she said. "I get nervous sitting down." She frowned at Joe with her flat, cream-smearred face, as if he were the cause of all her troubles of the moment.

After the program was over, the bathrobed man turned off the set and muttered. "I knew it was going to end that way."

"You always know, don't you?" the woman said sarcastically. "You always have it all figured out."

Joe cleared his throat. "Excuse me," he said. "I don't want to be in the way, Mr. . . .?"

"Barnes. I'm Sam, and Miss America over there, she's Gladys." The man took a cigar from a bathrobe pocket and unwrapped it.

"Can't you wait?" the woman snapped.

"It's up to you, of course," Joe said, "but I'd like to get on with it as soon as . . ."

"I didn't mean you," the woman interrupted, glaring at the cigar. "I meant *him*. He knows it makes me sick when he smokes so soon after dinner."

"I wasn't going to light it," the man said tauntingly. "Did you think I was going to light it?"

"Look," Joe said in exasperation. "All I want to do is get things moved."

"What things?" the woman asked.

"Miss Brokowski's. You know her, don't you?"

"We know who she is," the man said.

"She wants to move," Joe said.

"Sure she does," the man said. The woman chuckled.

"She said you'd be ready."

"Oh, we've been ready for a long time," the man said. The woman chuckled again.

"Is there anything wrong?"

The man and woman looked at each other. "You're not the first one that's been up," the man said. "She's wanted to move before. But she never goes through with it."

"It'd be right nice going down there," the woman said wistfully. "We could use more room, all right."

"If you'd keep the place cleaned up, it wouldn't look so bad," the man said.

"Hah!" said the woman indignantly. "Who is it leaves stuff lying around all the time? I ask you, who is it?"

"Please," Joe said. They glared at him as if he were a telephone caller who had dialed the wrong number and refused to hang up. "If you don't mind," he said, "I plan to start bringing up Miss Brokowski's things."

The man shrugged. "Go ahead," he said. "You'll get some chairs up, and then you'll see."

"You'll see, all right," the woman added ominously.

As Joe carried out the first few pieces — the coffee pot and cannister, the hotplate, a stack of magazines, a chair — Miss Brokowski sat by the window, watching both him and the courtyard, as if he were going to take things from the yard as well as the room. He half expected her to remind him not to forget to take the children. Yet she seemed surprised that things were really leaving the room. Sometimes, on re-entering the room, he caught her staring at the places where the missing items had been.

On each trip he left what he had taken in the hall outside 523. He kept hoping the Barnes' would come out and offer to help, but the door remained shut. The elevator still did not work, and climbing the stairs was tiring. He was reluctant to check on the elevator; he had a feeling it would take him forever to find out anything. But after he had struggled up the stairs with the first chair, he decided he had better ask Miss Brokowski about it.

"What?" she asked, looking at him vaguely.

"The elevator. It won't work."

"Oh." She glanced around the room, as if she were looking for the elevator. "Well, I don't know anything about it."

"Maybe Mr. Barnes would know."

"Barnes?" She frowned. "I don't believe I know him."

"The one upstairs. In five twenty-three."

"Oh no," she said. "The McCarthys live there."

The smell of incense was very strong. "He told me the name was Barnes."

"Well," she said indifferently, "the McCarthys used to be there. People come and go, and I'm not very good on names."



"You mean," he asked slowly, "you wanted to move before the Barnes' came?"

"It's not so easy to move," she said defensively.

He shook his head. "I'd better get on with it." He picked up a chair.

"What are you doing?"

"Helping you move, of course. You asked me to come here and help you move. Don't you remember?"

She stared at him, as if he had come to evict her. "Why don't you leave things alone?" she said accusingly. "I didn't ask you to come here. I only asked you for a name."

He was suddenly very angry. "A name you wouldn't have to call! You know why you feel old? It's because you're dying here!" He put his face close to hers. "You've got to move!"

She stood up and looked at him wonderingly. Then she turned away. "It's so much like the room I used to teach in," she said softly. "The vestibule was over there" — she nodded toward the bed — "and the room was big, like this . . . and there was a courtyard, where my children . . ."

"Played," he finished gently.

She faced him. "Died," she said. "Died."

He felt numb. "I'm sorry."

"Bayonets," she said. "They thought it was a game at first . . ." She licked her lips. "And grenades, to finish . . ." She looked out the window. "There was so much sun . . . how could it have happened when there was so much sun?"

"It's over now," he said. "You've got to let it be over."

"I've tried. But . . . you are Polish, you should understand."

"I'm American."

"But you are Polish too."

"Yes . . . I am Polish too."

She touched the windowsill. "You must forgive me," she said. "I won't trouble you any longer."

His anger came back. "You're going to move," he said. "Now." He grasped her shoulders, and turned her from the window. "I'm putting you to work. You've worked for me before, and you're going to work for me now. You're going to help me carry your things out of here."

She looked in wonder at his hands. "Tighter," she said. "I want to feel it. I want to know strength."

He held her more tightly. He felt as if he were pressing away incense and cobwebs. She rested her cheek against his hand. "Yes," she said. "It's good to feel that. A countryman's hand. Our hands were not strong then."

"But they tried," he said. "They reached for honor."

She nodded, and began to cry.

"It's time," he said.

"Yes."

The move took ninety minutes. It was painfully difficult at first, but Miss Brokowski saw the building superintendent and got the elevator started, and the Barnes' — when confronted by a hall full of furniture and two resolute faces — pitched in with a grumbling excitement, and just as Joe was beginning to realize that it was really being done, it was over.

Miss Brokowski took off her shoes and, still holding them, looked out the window. "I told you it was a better view," she said. "There's a sort of park . . ."

"It's a fine view," Joe said.

"I imagine there'll be . . . real children down there sometimes."

He nodded. "You might get to know some of them."

"Do you think so? I . . . I would want it to be so." She put her shoes on the windowsill, as if in a new place shoes could go anywhere.

"Let me know."

"Yes." She paused. "I might want to come back to work."

"You'd be welcome."

She touched his cheek. "Will it turn out well for me here?"

"If it doesn't, you can always move."

"Yes," she said slowly, "I can always move."

In the parking lot a policeman was standing by his car. "This yours, buddy?"

"It's mine. Is anything wrong?"

"You don't have an apartment sticker. This isn't for public parking."

"I was just helping a friend change rooms. I didn't know I wasn't supposed to park here."

"Oh, it's all right. Seeing as how you were visiting inside. It's just that the car's been here quite awhile. Musta taken your friend half the night to get moved."

"A little longer than that," Joe said. "A little longer than that."

Inviolate On Shawnee St.

Jack Matthews

"I wouldn't be surprised," Mrs. Hanawalt said to June on the fourth day of the old man's illness, "that it was worry over the Bettinger's that brought all of this on."

Mrs. Hanawalt had said this as if the idea had just then flashed in her mind. In fact, however, she mentioned it three times before to her daughter, who by now had difficulty in finding an adequate response to her mother's words.

The woman frowned at her daughter, seeming to wonder how she could be so heartlessly phlegmatic when her elderly father was dying. After staring at her for a moment, Clara Hanawalt went upstairs to see if Pierce was doing as well as could be expected. She stayed upstairs about forty five minutes, then came down looking deeply troubled.

"June," she said, standing expectantly until her daughter looked up. "June, he admitted that what the Rettinger's are doing has made him sick. In so many words he has now admitted it."

"I don't know what we can do to stop them," June said. There were strings in her neck when she raised her face, and Clara noticed them; whereas she herself was as plump and smooth as a filled balloon, and didn't have a wrinkle in her face.

"It's David Rettinger," Clara said, sitting so heavily in the chair that her heels bounced off the floor. "I told you, didn't I, that I phoned him two or three weeks ago, and he came right out and admitted that he was going to turn their old place into an apartment house?"

June was silent. She was filing her nails busily, and she suddenly realized that her hands were so close to her face that she was staring at them almost cross-eyed.

"Well, didn't I tell you?" her mother asked, half with hope that she might be able to tell the story again, and half with irritation.

"Yes, I think you told me."

"He *admitted it*. 'Yes,' he said. 'That's what I plan to do, Mrs. Hanawalt.' As big as you please. If he goes through with it, June, it will *kill* your father. Honestly, I can't really understand what you people in that generation of yours think you're doing!"

June rubbed a tender spot on her finger with the emory board.

"Pierce's grandfather made this estate," her mother intoned, looking around with some of the bland unconsciousness of a person petting a dog. "And his father helped build it up, and then finally Pierce lent his hand. The Hanawalt's made Shawnee Street what it is, and they have always been prominent in town;

the fact is we've made Shawnee Street into the heart of our community. It is really a form of desecration to . . . somehow *gratuitously* destroy the beauty and calm we've created here."

Her eyes were glazed with a vision that her words, presumably, only adumbrated. For another minute she sat silently, then she asked in a whisper: "Why, do you know what apartments would bring? The kind of people, I mean?"

"It is a shame!" June said, still staring at her fingers as she filed.

Her mother nodded and then told her what kind of people would come to live beside their estate if David Rettinger did such a thing.

Upstairs in her room, late that night, June lay down with her clothes on and stared at the ceiling. After a few minutes, she started humming a song she had known as a girl. It seemed years since she'd even thought of the song.

There was a knock at the door.

"June?"

"Yes?"

"Let me in. It's your mother."

Who else might it be?

"Did I hear you crying, June?" Her mother asked, her eyes dark with interest as she stared at her daughter lying on the bed.

"Of course not. When did you ever hear me cry?"

"I heard you make a sound."

"I make sounds all the time. You know I like to hum when I'm alone."

But her mother didn't hear this answer. She stood there looking vaguely about, and June was momentarily aware that her mother had never been comfortable in this room. Both she and her father had always made much of the fact that this room was June's *very own, to do with as she pleased*. But what, after all, could a girl have done, when the room was a mere oasis in this deserted estate? Who, for instance, could have come here without their knowing and approval?

"June, we haven't talked together since you've had your divorce," her mother said.

"I know."

"Was he . . . was he *mean* to you, June?"

"I don't feel like talking about it. It seems so far away and completely done with, that I don't think I could say anything sensible about it."

Her mother removed her glasses and wiped her eyes with a handkerchief. She walked heavily over to the cushioned rocker and sat down, sighing. "I didn't think you'd tell me anything," she said in a low voice. "It

seems you've always been remote from me. And now that Papa's dying, it hurts to have you act that way."

June turned her head away from her mother and gazed at the familiar metal hinge which the old fashioned window swung upon. The hinge was a fantastic thing, shaped like an ugly hand, an eagle's head, a sting ray, a comet . . . and in the interior of the hinge, one bolt stood out like an unblinking eye. As a child she had been fascinated, and at times terrified, by the dented old piece of metal which her imagination kept insisting upon bringing to life.

She heard the rocker start to work back and forth with a no-nonsense squeak and then a thud from her mother's oxfords smacking the floor.

"I called again," Clara Hanawalt said.

"Called who?"

"David Rettinger."

"Oh."

"He can't be influenced," she said. "If we could afford it, we might be able to buy the old place; but what about the taxes? And the upkeep? Why, David's



got enough money! You know very well he doesn't have to turn it into an apartment house to keep it up! He just wants to make it pay. That's the trouble with your generation: they want everything they do to pay. Money, money, money. Where's ideals?"

Suddenly, she jumped out of the rocker and left the room. June got out of bed, looked at her face in the mirror, and started combing her hair. Then she looked at her comb and saw three hairs, as coarse as banjo strings. She jerked them out one by one and started at them, wondering what it was that her mother was plotting.

All that night, June could hear old Pierce mumbling and crying out in his sleep. Her mother was silent, but it was her mother, after all, who done something that night. She had come up with a plan, while they were sitting in front of the television set that evening. June could sense it the minute she glanced at her mother and saw she was not looking at the set, but staring slightly over it into the distant shadows of the room.

But Clara didn't actually say anything, and June realized that she would have to wait. She stood there with her hankie plastered tightly against her mouth, while her mother glanced at her warily and leaned over to turn the television to another channel.

"I think I'll go up and see Daddy," June said, after a while.

"That's all right," her mother said. "Ask him if he wants me for anything. If he's awake, that is."

June climbed the steps and went to her father's room.

Inside, it was dark and warm, smelling of the oldness of his flesh as well as the secondary smells of mussed pillowcases and sheets. His false teeth grinned up at the ceiling from a water glass on the night stand, and the profile of his bald old eagle head was thrust back, eyes closed, as if he were poised at the brink of a colossal sneeze.

June sat down and whispered "Daddy" at the old man for a few minutes; then she got up and went back downstairs.

"I think you can persuade him," her mother said triumphantly. "After all, at one time he liked you."

"What are you talking about?" June asked.

"Liked you. *Liked you!* You know — boyfriend. Birds and bees." Clara seemed outraged at her daughter's slow-wittedness.

June looked above her mother's head.

"What are you grinning for? You know it's the truth."

"Why, it was *never* true! Dave never liked me. I was never his girlfriend. We didn't even have one date."

"Can't you think beyond dates?" Her mother asked. "Why I remember seeing that boy walk home from school by your side a hundred times. If that isn't liking, I don't know what it!"

June whooped with laughter. "Why, we *lived* side by side. Did you expect us to pretend we didn't know each other?"

"There were other ways," Clara Hanawalt said, nodding with her eyes narrowed. "Edith Rettinger told me ten times if she told me once that David had a crush on you. He would've asked you for your precious dates if . . . if . . ."

"If what?" June asked in a loud voice.

"Why, if you had been *interested*. The Rettinger's didn't have anything like the background you had. The advantages, you might say, and family. And all the things that matter. I don't think Edith Rettinger could have forgotten this difference. She was very, very impressed by it. She was an awfully nice person, Edith Rettinger was!"

June whooped. "You *hated* her! Don't you think I remember? You *hated* the woman. How can you forget so much?"

Such an unavoidable and unpleasant truth as this touched a mysterious switch in her mother's mind and emptied it. For a curious instant June now watched her mother as she blinked vaguely and seemed to listen to the wind. She knew that Clara now remembered nothing. The subject of Edith Rettinger was ended.

So her mother went back to her plan, saying, "You must go and see him."

"Who?" June asked.

"David Rettinger. Who else have I been talking about? He had a crush on you, June, and he will still listen to what you say."

"I don't want to do it," June said.

For a moment, her mother was silent. Then she said: "You are the most selfish person I have ever met. When is the last time, pray tell, that you ever did *anything* for someone else?"

For an instant, June was aware that the television set was on, and there was a man there talking rapidly about a new floor cleaner and wax combined. He seemed so earnest, that June wondered momentarily which of their two worlds was the real one — hers, in this high-ceiling old house, or his, in the walnut box, with everything appearing either in shadow or glowing forth in a solder-like brilliance.

"You know, of course, that his wife left him."

"Of course I know it!"

"Well, don't jump at me like that. I don't know if you know things or not, you're so unconscious most of the time. And then you've been away, you know."

"Well, I don't see how that alters things," June said, running her hand lightly through her hair.

"Don't be silly."

"I don't care to listen any more. It's a ridiculous idea."

"I haven't given you my idea yet. You just listen. You can invite him over for dinner. And then you can talk to him. You don't get over these feelings you've had when you're young; they always stay with you. I've found that out in life."

"Ridiculous," June said.

"Just keep still and listen. Do you know your father is *dying* upstairs? Aren't you at all concerned about giving him a little peace before he dies, and the knowledge that *something* he has worked for all his life will rest safe and unchanged beyond his death?"

"Why do you have to bring me into all of this? If it would do some good, why, I might do it; but this is just ridiculous."

"Just listen to me, for once in your life, while I explain to you how your father feels."

June sat down and stared off into the darkness, facing the empty dining room, while her mother sat behind her and recited the saga she had so often recited, about Pierce and his home on Shawnee Street, and the ideals of this twisted, water-drinking aristocracy, worshipful of two things: money and ignorance of the world beyond Shawnee Street and the town.

Once, during her mother's recital, June heard old Pierce groan upstairs and cry out. She pictured him as a great king, lost in the wilderness of age. She turned and stared curiously at her mother. But Clara merely paused long enough to identify the sound — glanced up, as if seeing through the floor into Pierce's room, then continued with the tale of the old man's investments in real estate in the 1920's.

Why, Clara herself didn't care about Pierce! It was a compulsion she was acting out. And for the first time, June detected a look of actual stupidity on her mother's face. It explained so much; the riddle of her character was clearing up, bit by bit, year by year; if June were to come back and live with her long enough, she might someday know her mother's every dimension, as clearly as the antique decorations in the two-acre Hana-walt lawn, or the symbolized and ornate furniture that stood Oxymandias-like in the darkness of the hall, the parlor, the library and the sitting room.

"You can *buy* the Rettinger house," June suddenly cried out. "You know goddam *well* you can!"

"It isn't practical," her mother said, in a voice that coiled inside her mouth, guarded and shrewd. And June knew, then, that there was something else . . . something as yet intangible to her, as she faced into the whirring, complex machinery of her mother's planning.

They talked until 11:25 P.M., at which time June gave in and said, yes, for the sake of peace and quiet she would consent to David Rettinger's being invited to dinner, and she would even do her best to influence him not to make an apartment out of his house. But she was also curious. She wanted to observe how far her mother would go. It was clear that, iceberg-like, the plan was ponderously fixed like a small continent beneath the surface of her mother's words.

"The doctor said he must never be interrupted while

THE EVERYDAY HOLLIDY

I.

Hollidy would be a writer,
but he will not write a letter
home even.

He has a typer
that sits, covered, under
a large scythe, hung
on the window casing.

Sometimes

he sits at the typer,
but he never can get serious.

Hollidy has books, good ones,
that he reads only for laughs,
and he laughs himself to sleep.

Hollidy is O.K.;
a little silly sometimes
in a planned sort of way,
but he gets by with women,
not like us, but by.

II.

Hollidy laughing, silly,
a little drunk, afraid
to buy the *Times*;

Hollidy

turning off the news.

Hollidy, just as sorry
as he can be about it,
but he has to laugh;

Hollidy

weary in the service of his country,
armed, saluting, laughing.

And again, laughing in bed
with release, with his wife, who says
some terrible things;

Hollidy

divorced and laughing in a bar.

They almost locked him up,
he laughs so damned much.

he is sleeping," her mother said. "Like I've told you before."

"You've never told me that."

"You don't listen to me, that's the trouble. I know very well I told you."

"Well, what's the difference. I just thought I would go in to see him this morning."

"You just concentrate on making yourself as attractive as possible. I want David to be impressed tonight. You look tired and a little hard today."

"Thanks a lot."

"I only say it to help."

"Is Daddy excited about the dinner?" June asked.

"He doesn't know about the dinner. And that's one reason I don't want you to go in there today. He'll be able to tell from your face, and the excitement will be bad for him."

"He doesn't know? You said you told him yesterday."

HOLLIDY AND WILFRED OWEN

Hollidy is honest in a bar, and now, quiet.
He thinks he'd tell Owen what he has in mind
for a poem, if only Owen hadn't died.

Hollidy has re-read *From Here To Eternity*,
and he thinks Owen knew how Pruitt felt,
crying at the musing of his body.

Hollidy is alarmed at what a bullet would do to
the liquor
and the learning he's stomached all these years.
He feels a hole in his forehead, and nods to see
the outpour.

He is working out old phone numbers, mentally,
on a dial:
a powerful charm against war; and he works new
numbers.
One thing Hollidy isn't is suicidal.

Hollidy is thinking of how good it's sometimes
been
and how bad others, and how there was good in
the bad
and it wasn't wasted or lived for a bullet,

and how he wouldn't shoot anyone in the genitals.
"It was Owen's pity to think this and still be
killed,"
he says, and you know he's drunk, for it's Owen
he tells.

Harold Tinkle

"I did not."

"You did so."

"I did not! And when I say I don't want his sleep disturbed, I mean exactly what I say. I want him to sleep today to gain strength for tomorrow. We'll tell him then, and I hope we'll also be able to tell him that David Rettinger has changed his mind. And stop staring at me like an absolute ninny."

"I'll leave him alone. Get off your high horse."

"All right," her mother said, vibrating her hands up and down, like an angry pianist. "All right."

Late in the afternoon, June sat massaging her face with cold cream, staring into her mirror.

She thought of old Pierce in his room. She opened her door to the hallway, and heard the television set chattering in the deep distance of the first floor. Her mother was either there, sunk in apathy before the set, or — more likely, excitedly plotting things as her glazed vision fastened upon whatever program was playing. Or perhaps she was out in the kitchen.

There was something additionally odd about her mother today. Her face was harder, more set, shinier. Her distractions more astronomical; the signs of inner resolve more intense.

For an instant, June had considered putting on her raincoat and hat and going out a half hour before David was supposed to arrive, leaving her mother there alone with him. She was still considering it, in fact; the only thing that was wrong was that she would never know exactly how the foolishness turned out. Her mother would never tell the truth about anything . . . was congenitally incapable of even knowing what the truth is. The whole world was altered to fantasy and lies the minute it was reflected in the crazy mirrors of her mind.

Maybe June would stay for the meal, only she didn't really know. Wouldn't know, in fact, until she saw herself doing one thing or the other, and then would know, and watch herself as she acted.

But now, she was disturbed about something else, too. Knowing the fantastic ability of her mother to spin plots and entangle — not only those nearest — but whole neighborhoods and communities in the involute consequences of her acts . . . knowing this, June was thinking of her father who lay dying in the other room.

Distance between them was inevitable, because of Pierce Hanawalt's age. But in one way, he had been more perfect in her eyes than a father who might have shared her games and bickered with her. Although he had been a known presence throughout her childhood, he had always come to her as an aged relative visiting from his remote second-story office or returning from a business trip. He was tolerant, calm and huge, in contrast to her mother who was always wearing the armour of a thousand schemes and swiftly brandishing small weapons of malevolent concern. As a girl, June had loved her daddy and had indulged herself in his vast acceptances as if he had been a kind of human playground for her — made for her pleasure, but also accommodating whole populations of other times, things and people beyond her understanding.

So now she was deeply, if mutely, sorrowful that

her father was dying; and yet found herself considering his death as something secondary to what her mother was trying to bring about. She had felt ashamed for this feeling ever since she had come back to share in the death watch and waiting.

She wiped the cold cream off her face and went out into the hall and down to old Pierce's room. Putting her hand on the knob and starting to turn it quietly, she discovered that the door had been locked.

For an instant, she stood in the hall trembling with an awful suspicion. Then she walked to her Mother's room and searched until she found the key that led to Pierce's bedroom through his private bathroom.

June walked down the hall to the bathroom door beyond, and walked in. The smell of the bathroom was flat, a little like the basement of an empty house. No smell of soap or shaving cream. She tried the door opposite, that led into her father's room, and found it locked, as she had expected. Quietly, she put the key in the key hole and turned it until she heard the latch click. She moved the door open slowly, and stepped three times into the cold darkness. Then she stared for a moment at the marble-like corpse of her father . . . having expected such a sight, almost in every detail. And yet she heard herself panting as if she had just run an enormous distance. She stepped backwards through the door into the bathroom, and locked the door after her. Then she returned to her room.

The dinner flowered before her like an island of thick weeds, and David Rettinger, who had gotten bald and fat, was sitting at the table talking, and her mother was smiling sweetly and prodding her occasionally with looks to come to life and be charming with David.

But the discovery she had made affected her like a hammer blow, and June hardly opened her mouth all evening. Once she stumbled on the rug going from the dining room into the front room. Her mother pinched her arm hard and whispered through gritted teeth: "You act like you're drunk or something! Will you please act *right*?"

She walked slowly into the front room, where David was sitting on the sofa, smoking a cigarette and letting his fat belly spill like a filled hot water bottle over his belt. Once he belched out loud and didn't excuse himself.

"Nothing will move him, Mother," June heard herself whisper. She was carrying a glass tray with three glasses too full of sherry tilted dangerously on the glistening surface. At least she had meant to whisper, for David was only about thirty feet away, still lumped on the sofa in the grandiose aftermath of his gluttony.

But her voice had been loud, and David had asked, "What's that?" and her mother had gasped and had half-turned toward her in confusion.

Then June heard her mother talking rapidly to David about her feelings with regard to his plans . . . how *beneath* David it was to convert his old home into a boarding house.

"But there are these college kids who need places to live," David said, scattering cigar ashes on his pant leg as he gestured.

Then Clara commenced talking about old Pierce . . . his dying wishes concerning the neighborhood, his years of greatness in the building of Shawnee Street into what it was . . . all the arguments she had intoned during the past few days. For June, the evening had already lasted too long. The big clock ticked the seconds away and her mother's words snowed into her mind like something dislodged from the calcium edges of a dream.

But suddenly David was saying it was past eleven o'clock (staring with a frown at a gold watch on his fat, hairless wrist), and Clara was standing tilted backwards, her mouth pursed in a permanent flinch of anger, her eyes glassy and unfocused with wrath.

June arose and shook hands with someone, and spoke words of leave-taking. She could smell David Rettinger's cigar, mixed with stale sweat from his clothes. She could hardly understand that this man had once been a child and she had once played with him and accepted him as a friend.

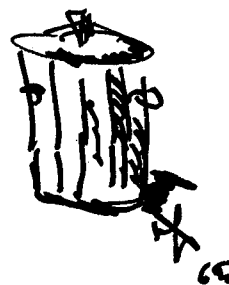
June turned back into the house when the door finally closed and heard her mother whisper one word: "Failed!"

The word smacked the surface of her mind like a tossed brick, rippling cold waves of terror up and down her body until even her vision of the room began to ripple and waver; and then it seemed as if someone turned the lights down halfway from a secret master switch.

She was dimly aware of her head striking the wafer-like carpet; and then, for only an instant, she dreamed a furious little dream. A dream in which David Rettinger as a child was standing knee-deep in her mother's geraniums, holding his hands up to his mouth, and shouting in a voice as far-away as water dripping deep under earth: "All-ee, all-ee in free!"

June felt herself trying to run, only she was not trying to run toward home base so that she could touch it safely, but trying instead to run away from David and the thick nightmare of the flowers, for ever and ever.

Then she was lying on the sofa . . . on her back, and something cold and squashy was splashing on her forehead. She looked up into her mother's dilated eyes. Her mother was dipping the wet cloth upon her eyebrows letting the still-soapy water run down into her ears, and whispering, "Weak! Selfish! Why, you ninny, you actually *fainted*! If I didn't know you better, I'd have thought you were drunk."



Books

SOUTHERN CHRONICLE

Old Powder Man by Joan Williams. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. (New York, 1966), 312 pp. \$5.95

Tenants of the House by Heather Ross Miller. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. (New York, 1966), 119 pp. \$3.75

The Last Gentleman by Walker Percy. Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, 1966), 409 pp. \$5.95

A Generous Man by Reynolds Price. Atheneum (New York, 1966), 275 pp. \$4.95.

Reading the literary quarterlies today one would assume American literature has entered into the Age of the Jewish Novel. The Establishment seems always to be extolling the works of Bellow, Malamud, Roth, Mailer, Heller, Salinger and company. Many are eager to point out that the influence of the Southern novelists who held sway in the Forties — Faulkner, Warren, McCullers, Welty, Capote, et. al — is no longer felt. Which is just so much fiddle. They forget the Fifties gave us such considerable talents as William Styron, Flannery O'Connor, William Humphrey, and Shirley Ann Grau, to name four. And the current crop would clearly indicate the Southern novelist will not only endure, he will prevail.

The four novels listed above are all second novels by relatively young Southerners. Each author's first work was greeted by critical acclaim. Three of them won major prizes. Each author has now published a second novel written with great assurance and insight. In our troubled times the Southerner still has something to say to the world-at-large.

Joan Williams' first novel, *The Morning and the Evening*, won the \$10,000 John P. Marquand Award in 1962. It seemed to me then a well-written but not very original work. Its central character, a kindly man born not only a deaf mute but an idiot as well, seemed reminiscent of other characters, other novels. After Faulkner's Benjy and Mrs. McCullers' Singer, the idiots and the deaf mutes had just about had it. The very conception of *The Morning and the Evening* prevented Joan Williams from demonstrating her ability to develop a character fully: What can you do with such a hero? Given a mute, the good lines, if there will be any, already belong to the other characters.

In *Old Powder Man* Miss Williams dazzles us with her ability to accomplish just what was lacking in her first novel. She follows Frank "Son" Wynn from youth to his death — and even beyond that, to the in-

fluence he exerts upon his contemporaries even after death. The reader believes completely in "Son" Wynn, and the story of his rise in the dynamite business while his family life declines is at once fascinating and credible. One suspects the novel is drawn largely from autobiography, the characters are so intimately known: "Son's" mother, his father, and his second wife Kate are vividly — and I might say memorably — portrayed. *Old Powder Man* is a leisurely, Trollopian novel and we hope Miss Williams continues to write in this mode.

By comparison, Heather Ross Miller's *Tenants of the House* is slight. She describes Johnsboro, the town which is the setting for her novel, as looking "very much like a doll town made up of dollhouses." The image is revealing, for Mrs. Miller's fictional concern is with miniatures: We see tiny glimpses of her characters, and her book imparts tiny insights into the human drama.

This does not mean the fragility of Mrs. Miller's method and scope render the novel inconsequential. After reading *Tenants of the House* one realizes its whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Like *Old Powder Man*, the burden of the past hangs heavily upon the present. The white and the Negro families of Johnsboro react to the universal conflicts between tradition and change, love and death. The war involves some, its toll permanently altering the lives of others, and seems not to effect others at all. *C'est la vie*.

Attempting to enter the lives of a number of families in such a brief novel, however, Mrs. Miller fails to portray any one substantially. The reader is left with an unsatisfied desire to know *more* about the characters we have been introduced to, but have not yet gotten to know.

As in her first short novel, the prose is poetic and evocative of Biblical rhetoric. In most cases her tropes succeed. *Tenants of the House* is not nearly so fine a novel as her first, *The Edge of the Woods*, which was a brilliant and shattering story. If Mrs. Miller fails to make the mark with her second, she has at least attempted something far more ambitious and has succeeded to a greater degree than has many another writer.

Walker Percy's first novel, *The Moviegoer*, won the 1962 National Book Award. *The Last Gentleman* echoes some of the concerns of that novel — the necessity for facing responsibility, the meaninglessness of much of modern culture. Like *The Moviegoer's* protagonist, Binx Bolling, Percy's new hero, Will Barrett, floats tolerantly on life's surface but is nevertheless searching for a spiritual truth to anchor him. *The Moviegoer* is a novel structured upon one extended allegory, and, presumably, so is *The Last Gentleman*. Barrett is the twentieth-century drifter. He suffers bouts of amnesia, is an habitual eavesdropper, and wishes merely to get through each day with as little challenge as possible:

When he was a youth he had lived his life in a state of the liveliest expectation, thinking to himself: What a fine thing it will be to become a man and

know what to do — like an Apache youth who at the right time goes out into the plains alone, dreams dreams, sees visions, returns and knows he is a man. But no such time had come and he still didn't know how to live.

We follow Barrett from New York City through New Jersey; to a university town in Alabama; to Shut Off, Louisiana; and finally to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Sometimes he suffers from amnesia, some times he does not. Sometimes he experiences recurring *deja vu*. And sometimes he is "normal". During the course of his wanderings we meet many fascinating "modern" individuals, especially Sutter, a suicidal alcoholic and a failed doctor, who is convinced that lewdness is the sole means of salvation left to civilization. Through the device of Sutter's journal, Percy manages to say many pithy things about the way we live now. Sutter's journal serves to remind us that, despite the outrageous travesties in the book, the novel is essentially a novel of despair.

Barrett's story is a fugue on the theme of *deja vu*, and much of its repetition is intentional. The fact remains, however, that *The Last Gentleman* is too bloody long. It rambles, it sprawls, and the reader is never sure where it is headed. But Percy has given us several fascinating characters, some of the best dialogue of the decade, and a great deal to think about. *The Last Gentleman* will not be easily dismissed.

By the time this issue is published, the popular press will have roundly reviewed Reynolds Price's second novel, *A Generous Man*. My remarks will be brief. The novel once more takes up the Mustian family, already dealt with in his first, *A Long and Happy Life* (which won the William Faulkner Award) and in his book of stories, *The Names and Faces of Heroes*. Despite the major characters, which were familiar to those readers who have followed Price's fiction, the new novel represents a departure for the author. The book is suffused with burlesque, myth, coincidence, and the supernatural. It is a novel in which an escaped 20-foot python can wrap itself around a boy in a privy at the exact moment a cache of hidden money showers down upon boy, python, privy and all. To pull this off requires considerable skill, and Price possesses that skill. The new novel is as much in the genre of Twain and his celebrated jumping frog as were some of the stories of Flannery O'Connor, a tall tale with universal significance. What Price has gained in virtuosity, however, he has lost in characterization: *A Long and Happy Life* was a fine realistic novel, with as admirable a heroine as one is likely to encounter in modern fiction. *A Generous Man* is less realistic, and in forcing Milo to enact his mythic role, Price makes of him less hero than superman-god.

Whatever my reservations about the depth of Price's portrayal of Milo, and the suspension of belief occasioned by the uses of coincidence which would make even Hardy wince, the novel is a *tour de force*, ultimately a triumph, and of all four novels reviewed, stands the greatest chance of enduring.

Robert Phillips

WRONG NUMBER

From nowhere up
the line somewhere
he call me
up like this, I
being all bed
and naked ready with
my sleep, accusing thus:
"Dr. Machowitz?"
"Doctor . . . ?" I say
well dreaming nigh, which
voice I never hear
before and he:
"Machowitz", quick
like which and
leave it there, all
humming on its wire to me.
Pause. With all he
swelling closer. "You
will have dial
wrong", I spell, and backing off.
"This three three
eight five nine
two nine," I
number out.
Would he believe? No but.
All breathing closer still
to me this time he
loom, insisting
I be name. Then up
go silence round us,
smiling. Well no, I
would not. Naked no. And
crash his silence
down aloud.
"No-one of such a name
live here, I think," I shout
of sudden, hanging him
with no mean violence up.
Warm imprints where I
were in bed recoil
to welcome me.

DISJOINTED ON THE MIDWAY

Midway. William Ward Smith. Crowell, New York, 1966. \$4.95 pp. 174.

Admiral Smith has failed in his attempt to offer a significant, readable addition to the literature of World War II. His description of the Battle of Midway, and sketch of the preceding Battle of the Coral Sea are disjointed and cliché ridden. The almost total lack of objectivity in this narrative is inappropriate 25 years after the fact. *Midway* falls far short of its potential.

The buffs may read it, but should expect to be disappointed.

William A. Stoppel

THE ROOM

So I open this door there
is this man is
hanging there at
her breast that
she smile down

at. Come in, she call and
the man drop like
ripe plum, vanish
like small
black pea. I

love you, she
tell, reaching to my
hand, kiss me while
is clothes all
falling from.

Here, she say, with
long white
fingers her breast offering
(o sweet)
but this door is

swing open and he stand
there: come
in come in she
call, is smiling down at
me.

Peter Clothier

EXTRAORDINARY EYES

The Detective, Roderick Thorp. Dial Press, New York, 1966. 598 pp. \$5.95.

As *The Detective* opens, private detective Joseph Leland is being hired to investigate the mysterious details of a crime which has been committed three months prior. Leland's father is a police captain, Leland himself had been on the force and a local hero before becoming a pilot-hero in WW II. Using well-manipulated flashbacks interspersed with present developments, Roderick Thorp constructs a detective mystery with an immensity of detail, characterization and depth seldom encountered in this genre. Leland's wife, daughter, father; his client and her psychiatrist; the suicide under

investigation; old crimes and new are all linked credibly. This reader looks forward to a straight novel to tell him what path Joseph Leland followed after the shattering climax of this case. Recommended particularly to those who do not usually read detective novels. *Black Money*, Ross MacDonald. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1966. 238 pp. \$3.95.

Lew Archer's latest case involves him with another segment of California's varied population. Peter Jamison and his father; Ray, Marietta and Virginia Fablon; Doctor and Audrey Sylvester and a number of less important characters belong to the upper-income, exclusive club set. Professor Tappinger and his wife Bess and Allan Bosch are in the academic world. For Leo Spillman, Kitty, and Hendricks, Las Vegas is homeport. The central character links the lot of them and old crimes to new. In a different and frequently demonstrated way, Ross MacDonald, as does Thorp, adds depth and dimension to the murder mystery. Readers who have followed Lew Archer will not be disappointed and those who meet Lew for the first time in *Black Money* have a good evening ahead of them.

Alex Paul

FULL CIRCLE

Incubus. (Il Male Oscuro). Giuseppe Berto. Translated from the Italian by William Weaver. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1966. 388 pp. \$5.95.

This is a book to be read in one sitting; if you don't have the time, chances are you'll take it anyway. The compelling prose of this fictional autobiography of a writer in analysis rushes along in the apparently formless style of a psychiatrist's patient with very little punctuation (the original Italian had none at all). After a few pages, any irritation at the unconventional structure vanishes as the reader is caught up in the struggle of the writer to resolve the conflict between his dead father and himself. Indeed, it is this perfect blending of form and narrative that gives the book its remarkable power.

After deserting his father at the moment of his death, the writer is so tortured by guilt, physical pain, and inability to work, that he eventually seeks help from a psychoanalyst. With uninhibited clarity the patient probes the depths of his personality, searching for the cause of the neurosis. In the course of the search he reveals to himself, and to the reader, many facets of his relationships with others, especially the women in his life — mother, sisters, French mistress, wife.

We gradually become aware of the basic conflict, the feelings of both love and hate for the father, so idealized by the child that the adult is unable to accept the very ordinary man who is his father. With the help of the psychoanalyst and the love and patience of his young wife, the protagonist finally comes to understand the basis of his illness, and learns to accept his own limitations as a writer, in spite of an obsessive drive for glory. Ironically, at this point, he learns of his wife's infidelity, but can now receive this blow with humility.

Leaving Rome, he settles in a hut located on a point of land which looks toward Sicily, site of a small triumph of his father; here he finds contentment in a simple, solitary life.

When his teen-age daughter visits him years later, he sees in her the same repulsion for himself that he once felt for his own father. Thus the full circle is accomplished; he now finds peace with his father and God.

All the characters in the book are developed with careful detail, and emerge as vital human beings, though none have proper names. Plotless in the conventional sense, the book is written with a sense of urgency and suspense that propels the reader along with the momentum of a mystery yarn. Humorous observations on the paradoxes of life lighten some of the most anguished sequences, while in other passages the prose becomes lyrical.

This is an outstanding Italian literary work, admirably translated, which should gain as much recognition in this country as it has in Europe.

Mary Byerly

HITLER SANE?

Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict, 1941-1945, Alan Clark. William Morrow and Co., New York, 1965. 522 pp. \$10.00.

This is a valuable addition to the literature on the Russo-German agony of World War II. Clark has written an impartial and detailed discussion — or probably as much so as is possible. His point of view on personalities is different: Hitler is not a madman, Vlasov is an able commander.

Clark has outdone Carrel and Werth.

Well-written, worth reading.

William Stoppel

A MONSTER OF THE MIDLANDS

Alley Jagers. Paul West. Harper & Row, New York, 1966. 242 pp. \$4.95.

Alley, a twenty-five year old English plasterer who cultivates a phony Irish brogue, lives with his fat wife, Dot, and his quarrelsome mother, Mam, in the Midlands. Mam, when she isn't cuddling her pet dachshund or watching the "telly," finds her greatest pleasure in life in discrediting Dot. Dot, a vegetating type, retaliates one day by baking Mam's false teeth in the oven. When Alley zooms home on his Honda at the end of a day's work, he can look forward to little more than retreating to the attic to work on his model sail-planes and indulge his dreams of the Alley who might have been.

Thus *Alley Jagers* begins, and in the first hundred pages it would seem that Paul West had created something rare: a domestic novel set in the Midlands in which the characters devour each other, not in accord with the serious, stylized rituals of Lawrence, but with relish and high humor. Alley is developed as a sympathetic, three-dimensional character, and West's excellent ear for dialogue makes his scenes of family discord a joy to read.

In the second half of the novel the fortunes of Alley take an unexpected, and unfortunate, turn. Alley becomes a sadist and a psychopathic murderer, and, in the final chapter, schoolchildren enshrine him as one of the monsters of Midlands legend as they compose Lizzie Borden-type verses about him and use his name for the villain in their games. West does not adequately prepare the reader for such a conclusion, and his characters lose much of their vitality as they are forced into comic-strip molds. The Jagers clearly deserve a better fate.

Roy Proctor

"THE EXOTICA, THE ETERNAL EXILES"

The Wreck of the Cassandra. Frederic Prokosch. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966. 250 pp. \$4.95.

There are nine survivors of the disaster at sea on an island of compelling yet sinister loveliness, where "the sand was a peppered yellow, finely tinted with group up shells. . . . Palms were sprinkled at random the length of the crescent. In the middle rose a group of coconut palms and farther down there were some fat little palms with scarlet fruits. At the end, among the rocks, there were dark, feathery bushes which were covered with tufts of lavender blossoms." The mainland lay beyond the mangroves.

Here they quaff coconut milk and eat persimmons. Ibrahim, the ship's bartender, cooks them "crab stuffed with bananas, or a casserole of wood pigeons, bread-fruit, and sea urchins." Billy builds castles of sand; Tony and Laura, the unhappy American couple, torment one another; Zenzo, the Japanese boy, fishes and hunts, and Miss Eccles chases the beautiful, elusive butterflies. Wandering about, still in Fancy Dress Ball costumes — the Baron in his perruque, blue velvet coat and nankeen breeches, the wealthy Lily Domingo in her gold lamé gown and hat of ostrich feathers, Professor Shishnik portraying a mandarin in his red kimono, Ibrahim splendid in his silver loincloth and white turban — each finds his dark and glittering destiny. Lily is murdered in revenge by Ibrahim. Zenzo is pierced by a spear thrown by the natives. And Miss Eccles, an elephant's tusk driven into her body in a rite of human sacrifice, is metamorphosed into a butterfly.

With the haunting lyricism and shimmering prose of *The Dark Dancer* and *A Ballad of Love*, with the majesty and mystery, the sense of doom that pervades *The Seven Who Fled*, Prokosch spins his finely threaded tale. He writes of "the exotica, the eternal exiles," those who "are no longer a part of the world." The reader is borne with the castaways from beach to jungle to village, from the rocks to the flames, and finally, to the gods. This flight is portended by the Baron. As the doomed ship moves toward the China Sea, he gazes into the black waters, musing: "how infinitely peaceful, how suave and rhythmical. . . . But beneath all that suavity there's perpetual bloodshed and endless massacre." It is late summer in the year 1938.

A. Farrell Borenstein

Contributors

PETER CLOTHIER was born in 1936 in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and educated at Cambridge. He then taught in a high school for four years and in a Berlitz school in Germany for two years. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at The University of Iowa.

VICTOR CONTOSKI's first published story, "The Man With The Golden Fly" appeared in NAR in 1964. He has been a frequent contributor since.

JUDITH EISENSTEIN sends her poems from Los Angeles.

MILTON GILMAN lives in New York City.

PATRICIA GOEDICKE'S poems have appeared in many literary magazines, including a previous issue of *The North American Review*. She lives in the real Athens of the Midwest, Athens.

PHILIP HAMMIAL is a painter, who recently travelled 25,000 miles on \$306. He claims to have begged hardest in underdeveloped countries. His poems have appeared in *The Minnesota Review* and elsewhere.

CURTIS HARNACK was born in LeMars, Iowa; attended Grinnell College and Columbia University. In 1961, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship. He is the author of two novels, *The Work of an Ancient Hand* and *Love and Be Silent*.

LEO J. HERTZEL teaches at the University of Wisconsin at Superior.

ALYCE INGRAM'S last story in NAR was "The Original Investment." Her work has also appeared in the *Negro Digest* and *The Humanist*.

AL LEE is a well-known apartment hunter in New York. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Yale Review*, *Kenyon Review* and elsewhere, and he is the author of numerous volumes of poetry, including *Letters to a Draft Board*.

This is JACK MATHEWS' third appearance in NAR. He is a lecturer in the English Dept. of Ohio University of Athens. A book of his short

stories, *Bitter Knowledge*, was published last year by Scribner's.

WILLIAM SAYRES' wife wrote his biographical note. He is presently traveling in India and Afghanistan. Aside from his full scale career as Coordinator of Research for the Institute of International Studies for Teachers College at Columbia University, he is the author of two books of non-fiction and two novels. *Sonotaw* was published by Simon and Schuster in 1959; *Do Good* will be issued this month by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

An associate professor in Humanities at the University of Florida, JAMES SUNWALL has published in the *Western Humanities Review*. This is his first appearance in NAR.

Bibulous and pseudonymous, TONY SWAIN returns "instantaneously."

JAMES TATE, a member of the Writers Workshop at The University of Iowa, has just won the 1966 Yale Series of Younger Poets Competition for his book, *The Lost Pilot and other poems*. He comes from Prairie Village, Kansas, and, up to now, has published poems nationally only in *The North American Review*.

HAROLD TINKLE rolls cigarettes in Bakersfield, California, and in Iowa City, where he is a member of the Writers Workshop. His poems have appeared in the *Mad River Review*, *December* and elsewhere.

B. CANARY VAN LARE still lives in Louisville, Ky. Her story, "The Land Sublime," appeared in our January number.

Reviewers: ROBERT S. PHILLIPS, A. FARRELL BORENSTEIN, WILLIAM A. STOPPEL, ROY PROCTOR, MARY BYERLY, BERNARD E. RICHARDSON, ALEX PAUL

Mr. Howard Mumford Jones
Widener Library 415
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Dear Mr. Jones:

Please accept our apologies for inadvertently referring to you as Mumford in the review section of the May issue of *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*. We regret confusing you with your friend Lewis Mumford.

Sincerely,

The Editors



INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY BOOKSELLERS, Inc.

30 Irving Place, New York, N. Y. 10003

Telephone (212) 673-6220

Cables: MEIHOLM NEW YORK

Specialists in American and European Scholarly Books and Periodicals

Books and Subscriptions

We supply all currently available books and serial publications to libraries and scholars. Among our customers are many of the leading universities of the U. S., the British Commonwealth and European Continent. Subscription orders from libraries all over the world are handled efficiently with special attention given to difficult to obtain material and claims.

Periodicals

We maintain a substantial stock of back issues of scholarly and scientific periodicals in all subject matters and supply complete sets, partial runs, single volumes and issues.

Librarians are invited to send us regularly lists of desiderata which are checked upon receipt.

Accumulations of duplicates and backfiles no longer required are purchased by us at favorable prices. Large collections can be inspected personally by one of our representatives.

Please write for our current catalogues and leaflets indicating your special fields of interest.